CNMI's COVID total now 269. PAGE 5
Most CW-1 employers must file required semiannual report. PAGE 9

$1

Hafa Adai!

Saipan Tribune

Volume XXXI, Issue No. 195

www.saipantribune.com **FRIDAY** OCTOBER 1, 2021 www.facebook.com/saipantribune

$103.3M budget is now law

- **Move averts partial gov't shutdown**
- **New mental health court will get $600K funding**
- **Minor line-item vetoes made**
- **$275.38M in combined general, ARPA funds appropriated**

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Gov. Ralph DLG. Torres signed into law yesterday afternoon the $103.3-million budget bill for the CNMI government's operations for fiscal year 2022, averting a partial shutdown of government operations.

Gov. Ralph DLG Torres and Lt. Gov. Arnold I. Palacios pose with some members of the Executive, Legislative, and Judiciary branches after Torres signed yesterday afternoon the $103.3-million budget for fiscal year 2022. Inset shows Torres signing the budget bill into Public Law 22-08 as Palacios looks on at the governor's conference room.

FERDIE DE LA TORRE

Combining the $103.3 million from the general fund and the $175 million allocated to the CNMI from the American Rescue Plan Act, the CNMI government will have at its disposal a total of $275.38 million for government opera-

See $103.3M on Page 4

AT A GLANCE

As of 8:38pm, Sept. 30, 2021

VACCINATIONS IN THE CNMI

Eligible Population Fully Vaccinated:	82%
Days since last community transmission	190

Pfizer/BioNTech	
Initiated:	30,046
Fully Vaccinated:	29,317
Moderna	
Initiated:	4,866
Fully Vaccinated:	4,647
Janssen	
Fully Vaccinated:	802

GUAM	OLD	NEW	TOTAL
Positive	14.705	336	15,041
Recovered	11,149	64	11,213
Active	3,295	336	3,631
Deaths	195	1	196

SAIPAN	OLD	NEW	TOTAL
Positive	268	1	269
Traced via Travel Screening	231	1	232
Traced via Community Screening	37	0	37
Deaths	2	0	2

Source: Joint Information Center - Guam, Commonwealth Healthcare Corp., https://www.vaccinatecnmi.com/vax-dashboard/

TOGETHER, WE CAN

By DAVID M. APATANG
Special to the Saipan Tribune

David M. Apatang is the mayor of Saipan. He has been the mayor of Saipan since 2015. He is an Army veteran and has served the CNMI government for decades. As mayor of Saipan, he is responsible for administering government programs, public services, appropriations, and various federal programs extended to the island. His core responsibilities involve services, programs, and efforts for the community.

Let's support the Marianas Village Pride campaign

On Sept. 20, Hon. Mayor Efraim Atalig, representatives from the office of Hon. Mayor Edwin Aldan, representatives from the Marianas Visitors Authority, the Public School System, and I met with the Governor's Council of Economic Advisers and lis-

See LET'S on Page 4

Air Busan, Air Seoul send feelers

By KIMBERLY A. BAUTISTA
kimberly_bautista@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

With the CNMI's TRIP program growing in numbers by the day, two other South Korea-based airlines have started showing an interest in servicing a South Korea–Saipan route.

According to Marianas Visitors Authority managing director Priscilla Iakopo, two of South Korea's most popular airlines, Air Busan and Air Seoul, have reached out to MVA to participate in the Saipan-South Korea Travel Bubble program.

"We received an official letter from Air Busan and Air Seoul in their interest in want-

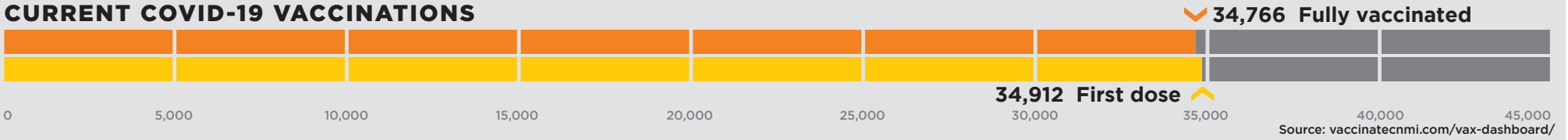
See AIR on Page 4

COMMUNITY VULNERABILITY

LEGEND:
- **Red:** Least safe
- Orange
- Yellow
- Blue
- **Green:** Safest

Source: Office of the Governor

CURRENT COVID-19 VACCINATIONS



Source: vaccinatecnmi.com/vax-dashboard/

INSIDE

BUSINESS
Bank of Guam's ad campaign is awarded two 2021 Brand Slam Awards.
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NATION
One of the most active volcanos on Earth, Halemaumau, is erupting on Hawaii's Big Island.
PAGE 14

ASIA
Former Japanese Foreign Minister Fumio Kishida will become Japan's next prime minister.
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GOT A NEWS TIP? TEL: 235-6397 / 235-2440 FAX: 235-3740 EMAIL: editor@saipantribune.com

Local

Gov. Ralph DLG Torres and Lt. Gov. Arnold I. Palacios share a photo with members of the Northern Marianas Humanities Council outside the Office of the Governor yesterday. Shortly before the photo was taken, Torres and Palacios proclaimed October 2021 as Humanities Month during a proclamation signing at the Office of the Governor conference room.

JOSHUA SANTOS

October 2021 is Humanities Month

By JOSHUA SANTOS
joshua_santos@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

October 2021 is Humanities Month, and the Northern Marianas Humanities Council will be holding multiple events celebrating the CNMI's local culture as well as the council's 30th anniversary this month, starting with a proclamation signing yesterday at the Office of the Governor.

What made the event more impactful for Gov. Ralph DLG Torres, who signed the proclamation with Lt. Gov. Arnold I. Palacios, was the reading of the proclamation in English, Chamorro, and Carolinian. Reading the proclamation in English was NMHC legal counsel Michael White, reading in Chamorro were Dandan Middle School students Jared Reyes and Angelina Camacho, and reading in Carolinian were Maya Rubeunog and Dany Defang.

Torres said he was proud to see the students yesterday reading and speaking Chamorro and Carolinian. Torres urged those who have been immersed in their culture and languages to share their experiences.

"I've never been more proud than today. ...There are different ways to promote our culture and language, but as you can tell, speaking, reading, and writing are a whole different story when you talk about [our culture], whether it's Refaluwasch [Carolinian] or Chamorro. Having you [students] at your age read [the proclamation in Chamorro and Carolinian], hats off to you," said Torres.

"[To] each one of us, there's a gift that you're given. To those that have the gift of culture and language, please share that. I cannot emphasize enough how valuable that is," he added.

Palacios lauded NMHC for its work in keeping the CNMI's local cultures alive and said that its work is "very important now more than ever" as the CNMI becomes more and more of a cultural melting pot.

"If you look back at [the CNMI's] history, we've been integrated with so many different cultures, the Spanish, the Germans. …In today's world, we've welcomed so many different people of different ethnic backgrounds and different countries who've made the Commonwealth their home," said Palacios. "So it is very important, now more than ever, that the Humanities Council continues to perpetuate [CNMI culture] and tell our stories and keep records of who we are and how we evolved as people whether it's through language [or] customs," he added.

NMHC executive director Leo G. Pangelinan recognized the CNMI's off-island scholars who are making an impact abroad as well as recognizing the CNMI's "cultural experts" at home. For him and NMHC, Pangelinan looks forward to continuing NMHC's pursuit of exploring the CNMI's rich culture.

"For the past 30 years, the Northern Marianas Humanities Council has served our community as a champion for a broad range of humanities programs and projects that address our collective intellectual interests and needs. This is what the council does, as it pursues its vision of navigating and saving our community through an ongoing process of examining who we are and expanding its reach to explore the rich diversity of cultural groups and lived experiences throughout our islands," said Pangelinan.

Others present at the signing were NMHC board chair Tracy Guerrero and other NMHC members.

Power service interruption on Tuesday

There will be a scheduled power service interruption on Tuesday, Oct. 5, 2021, to allow the Commonwealth Utilities Corp. to perform line clearing near the primary lines along Industrial Drive in Puerto Rico.

Tuesday, Oct. 5, 2021

- Momentary Outage Time: 9am–9:30am and 12:30pm–1pm
- Areas Affected: Puerto Rico Industrial Drive [Managaha Island Ferry Terminal, CNMJ Division of Fish and Wildlife, Saipan Stevedore, Commonwealth Ports Authority, Division of Customs Service, Mobil Oil Marianas, Shell Marianas, U.S. Army Reserve (partial), and Marine Enforcement Facility (Marina)].
- Circuit: Feeder 2
- Water Well(s) Affected: None • Wastewater Facility Affected: None

Tuesday, Oct. 5, 2021

- Outage Time: 9am–1pm
- Areas Affected: Marine Enforcement Facility (Marina) and Smiling Cove Marina Area.
- Circuit: Feeder 2
- Water Well(s) Affected: None
- Wastewater Facility Affected: None

For more information, contact the CUC Customer Hotline (236-4333) or monitor our Facebook page for the latest updates (https://www.facebook.com/CommonwealthUtilitiesCorporation/). ***(PR)***

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Inmates looking forward to NMTI pilot program—DOC chief

By JOSHUA SANTOS
joshua_santos@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Inmates who will soon be participating in a pilot program between the Department of Corrections and the Northern Marianas Technical Institute are excited to begin taking introductory trades classes through NMTI, according to Corrections Commissioner Wally Villagomez.

He said Monday at the "Kick Off Ceremony" at NMTI's Lower Base facility that the inmates believe the program will greatly benefit them when they re-enter society and search for work.

"They're excited about this program because it's going to benefit them. If they get out [of DOC], at least we're preparing them for society and they will be able to find jobs [through] all the training that they receive," he said.

Monday's proceedings at NMTI involved the signing of a memorandum of agreement between NMTI and DOC, making official a pilot program that would allow inmates to take introductory trades courses through NMTI. The inmates will meet in a classroom at DOC twice a week for 20 weeks.

Upon completion of 20 weeks of study, inmates will receive a certificate of completion, and after that will be asked to complete a survey to choose a specialized course of choice to study next.

Villagomez said that conversations between DOC and NMTI first began with Sgt. Jeffery Quitugua, and not too long after DOC legal counsel Leslie Healer became involved in the efforts to make the NMTI-DOC pilot program a reality. When asked if he has heard any feedback so far on the upcoming program, Villagomez said that inmates are "excited."

"It started out with my staff, Sgt. Jeffery Quitugua, who began meeting up with NMTI. When we got close to the [NMTI Kick Off Ceremony], our legal counsel [stepped in] to work things out," said Villagomez.

When asked how many inmates will be participating in the NMTI-DOC program, Villagomez said he and DOC are not allowed to disclose that number.

CGC certifies 12 new instructors in Adult Mental Health First Aid

Twelve instructors in the CNMI are certified in Adult Mental Health First Aid last Sept. 8-10, 2021. The virtual MHFA instructor certification training was taught by two Mental Health First Aid national trainers. CHCC

In partnership with the National Council for Mental Wellbeing, the Commonwealth Healthcare Corp.'s Community Guidance Center hosted a private instructor training for Adult Mental Health First Aid last Sept. 8-10, 2021, where 12 instructors were certified in an effort to increase workforce capacity and provide an effective and evidence-based education program to various communities throughout the CNMI.

The MHFA instructor certification training is an interactive training that teaches instructor candidates the MHFA course, inclusive of the five-step ALGEE Action Plan: Assess for risk of suicide or harm, listen nonjudgmentally, give reassurance and information, encourage appropriate professional help, and encourage self-help and other support strategies.

Additionally, the instructor training curriculum includes evidence-supported treatment and self-help strategies and prevalence data; program fidelity; in-depth instruction on facilitating the curriculum, including tailoring presentations to diverse audiences and learning environments; and module-specific courses that include population-focused information.

The virtual MHFA instructor certification training was taught by two Mental Health First Aid national trainers.

To become an instructor, participants are required to submit an application for approval, complete five hours of pre-work, attend three days of instructor-led training, pass an individual evaluation, and complete 30 minutes of post-work. Upon certification, instructors are certified to teach the course in three modes of delivery: virtual, in-person, and blended (part online, part in-person).

The 12 newly certified instructors will assist the CHCC CGC in delivering the MHFA program to various partner agencies and stakeholder groups.

The CHCC CGC congratulates the following individuals for achieving their instructor certification in Adult MHFA:

1. Tai Doram, CNMI Public School System/Behavioral Health Planning Council
2. Jennifer Mcquay, Department of Public Safety
3. Rachel Rebuenog, Department of Corrections
4. Charize Terlaje, Department of Fire and Emergency Medical Services
5. Mariah Barcinas, Department of Community and Cultural Affairs Division of Youth Services
6. Tonica Barcinas, Northern Marianas College-Cooperative Research Extension and Education Service
7. Jamielyn Famaw, CHCC Tinian Health Center
8. Joyce Flores, CHCC Maternal, Infant, Child & Adolescent Health Programs
9. Elora Masga, CHCC CGC
10. Lorielyn Lacay, CHCC CGC
11. Susanne Park, CHCC CGC
12. Shine Soalablai, CHCC CGC

For more information on MHFA, visit https://www.mentalhealthfirstaid.org. For more information and to request for the CGC's MHFA training, visit https://chcc.gov.mp/communitysupporttraining.php or contact the CGC at (670) 323-6560. ***(PR)***

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$103.3M

From Page 1

tions in the new fiscal year.

The gross identified budgetary resources for fiscal year 2022 totaled $144,848,801. Minus debt servicing costs, this leaves the government $98,897,301 that's available for appropriation. Adding to that the $4,487,022 budget for the Department of Public Lands, the grand total revenue available for appropriation is $103,384,323.

After signing the bill into law, Torres announced that government employees can wake up tomorrow morning knowing that there will be no shutdown, which prompted cheers and claps from members of the Executive, Legislative, and Judiciary branches who were present at the Office of the Governor's conference room on Capital Hill.

Present at the signing were Lt. Gov. Arnold I. Palacios, Senate President Jude U. Hofschneider (R-Tinian), House of Representatives Speaker Edmund S. Villagomez (Ind-Saipan), CNMI Supreme Court Chief Justice Alexandro C. Castro, Superior Court Presiding Judge Roberto C. Naraja, some lawmakers, Cabinet members, and other government staff.

Before signing the bill into law, Torres talked about some items in the budget that he vetoed at the recommendations of Attorney General Edward Manibusan as well as Finance Secretary David DLG Atalig, and the Office Management Budget.

Torres said some of the line-item vetoes were because some of the items are already provided in the law and incorporating them again in the budget bill were unnecessary. Torres said some of the items had good intentions, but not applicable under the budget itself.

Torres said they sent the budget to the Legislature in April 1, 2021, and then amended the submission last July. Hopefully next year, Torres said, the Legislature will pass the budget bill sooner so that it will give them, along with the Office of the Attorney General, more time to review it.

"But nevertheless, we're happy that we have a working document that we will be signing into law," said Torres.

Torres congratulated the CNMI courts for getting around $600,000 for the Mental Health Court.

"That's something that I also want to personally thank the Legislature for putting that into this as a priority. As we have seen the Drug Court as very successful and now venturing into our Mental Health, that's something that all of us in this room understands the importance for our community," he said.

Palacios said the line-item vetoes are mostly administrative provisions, and there is nothing major. For the most part, the budget as passed by the Legislature is basically intact in terms of the numbers, he added

The governor said he also vetoed the public auditor section that provided exemptions to some agencies from paying the mandated 1% public auditor's fee. He said the public auditor needs that funding to do what they need to do.

"So across the board, I just line-item vetoed that part so that everybody gets to pay their 1 percent [to OPA]," he said.

About the ARPA funds, Torres said he wants to have a good working relationship with the Legislature, adding that they did give an overview on how the ARPA funds will be spent.

"Mr. Speaker, you know that I do call you and my doors are always open to you and to anybody in the House that wants to come and discuss ARPA. Same with the Senate," he said.

He said they did send the ARPA spending plan to the U.S. Department of Treasury and that plan was approved.

"If there is any amendment to be done, rest assured that they will make this proper channel," the governor said.

With respect to the Micronesian Legal Services, he said he line-item veto that in the general fund, but promised that he is going to help MLS instead using ARPA funds.

Torres said the $50,000 allocated to the Office of Planning Development to do the feasibility study for e-gaming was vetoed because they believe that this should be done under the Commonwealth Casino Commission because that's the entity that does that business.

One item that he did not touch in the budget is the allocation of $25,000 for a desk audit on the CNMI government. Torres said he looks forward to that but said that Finance Secretary Atalig believes it's going to cost a lot more than $25,000.

Another was the allocation of $50,000 for the Public School System to do an environmental assessment feasibility study for Hopwood Middle School. "That's going to take a lot more than $50,000 but the idea there is good and that they need to do that," Torres said.

A provision in the budget for a JD Edwards system to keep track of government funds was line-item vetoed because the government is going to use a whole new system, Torres said. "This is a whole new system. I was just briefed about it an hour ago. So I hope that we all get the patience and understanding of this new system," he said.

Torres said the goal is to be a paperless government, where they can also look at the progress and expedite the routing of papers, whether it's for procurement contracts or other permitting projects.

Torres said in a later interview that he started reviewing the bill over the weekend after he received it last Thursday night. He said he sat down with Atalig, the AG, and OMB and reviewed it on Tuesday. "Today was just the final touch on the final product of the bill," he said.

Torres said there's some good intentions in the bill, but some need to be put in separate legislations and some need clarifications.

The governor said one of the best highlights is the budget for the Mental Health Court. "We are giving them $600,000, so that's definitely a good start…and this is something that the community is in need and I'm happy to support that fully," he said.

"I want to again thank the Legislature, both houses, on the efforts put into it. But more so the signing of the budget today prevents the shutdown and that's something that no administration wishes…certainly even the Legislature," he said.

Palacios said fortunately they didn't have to work until midnight to get the budget done and that's a testament to both Houses, presiding officers, and chairpersons of the House Ways and Means and Senate Fiscal Affairs committees.

Palacios said there were some provisions that they did not agree with and they had to veto them at recommendations of the OAG, OMB, and Finance and he hopes they could later be worked out.

On the departmental salary increases, Palacios said the AG recommended that they go a separate route on that with a separate legislation to effectuate that particular issue.

Villagomez commended House Ways and Means chair Rep. Donald M. Manglona (Ind-Rota) and Senate Fiscal Affairs Committee chair Sen. Victor B. Hocog (R-Rota) for their work on the budget. "When we knew we were going into [committee] conference, I was keeping in touch with chairman Donald [Manglona] and, you now, thought that they're going to give themselves at least three days at most to have a product from the conference committee. Even the community was surprised that they were able to knock it off in, what, two hours or just a little over two hours, and you know they were able to iron out their differences," he said.

He said at the end of the day, they cannot make everybody happy but it's all about compromise and working together, as shown with some of the line-item vetoes.

"But it's fine," said Villagomez, adding that it's all about coming to the middle and coming to the table together.

Hofschneider described what the conference committee achieved on the budget as "monumental," recalling that the "guys burn midnight oil" last year.

"I'm not surprised simply because there is just funding all over, right. It's just really the general fund," Hofschneider said.

He said by virtue of them blessing the package that was submitted by the administration essentially solidifies and authenticates the spending plan of the ARPA as well.

Hofschneider said he is a staunch support of the Judiciary's efforts to kickstart the mental and behavioral court system, which is getting a lot of ground both legislatively, nationally, and now in the CNMI.

Castro said he is proud of the elected leaders of the Commonwealth.

Castro said as they sit there, he just got off CNN and Fox News that U.S. Congress is still wrestling with the budget and that they may have a shutdown as they cannot agree on a budget.

"But one thing I'm happy of my elected leaders here is we can agree and disagree today, but at the end of the day, we come together and sign this budget so that the government is open and the services provided to our people," Castro said.

Atalig said in an interview he is very pleased as they were able to avert a government shutdown.

"I think the Legislature and administration put together a nice bill to operate our government for the next fiscal year," Atalig said.

He said there are some areas that they still need to work with the Legislature in order to fine-tune what they and the administration want to accomplish.

A longer version of this story is available at www.saipantribune.com

AIR

From Page 1

ing to fly here," she said.

Iakopo said the two airlines are looking at launching their first flights to the CNMI as early as October.

"With the success of [the Tourism Resumption Investment Plan], they're actually looking to fly beginning October and November. In addition to that, T'Way has also shared that they want to add an additional flight on top of their weekly Thursday flights," Iakopo said.

The managing director said this interest in the CNMI is thanks to the fact that the CNMI is the safest travel destination amid this ongoing pandemic. "It very well shows that not only are we a safe destination, but also that the CNMI is a great interest in South Korea," she said.

In and update given by Ivan Quichocho, MVA board member and TRIP Korea chair, as of last Tuesday, from the inception of the program until the end of the year, the CNMI has either served or has booked 7,899 passengers to participate in the program.

"That's starting from July through Dec. 31. For September, it looks like we're going to wrap up about 784 total passengers served. October bookings at the moment is at 2,194. for November, reservations at the moment is at 2,587, and December is 2,229," Quichocho said.

He said the current airlines servicing the program has also reached out to MVA to add services to accommodate the influx of passengers for the coming months.

"Starting Sept. 30 through to the end of the year, all flights are above 40% mark. So, we are getting some feedback from some of the carriers that are actually asking to add service," he said.

LET'S

From Page 1

tened to the presentation on its newest initiative—the Marianas Village Pride or the MVP Campaign.

Under the MVP Campaign, which launches on Oct. 4, the GCEA is encouraging residents of Saipan, Rota, and Tinian to take an active role in the beautification of their villages. The community is invited to join the Adopt-A-Median program, MVP Village Flag Art Contest, MVP Bus Stop Beautification Contest, and MVP Christmas Decorating Contest. GCEA also created MVP Lessons and Coloring Pages that teachers can use in their classrooms. This campaign was designed to welcome all residents to express their village pride by taking active roles in the beautification of their villages. There will be exciting incentives for schools to participate. Information will be available on GCEA's website at cnmieconomy.com.

I am excited to see what middle school and high school students can come up with when they design the flag for San Antonio and Chalan Kanoa, the two villages close to my heart. I grew up in CK before I moved to San Antonio after I got married. I also look forward to the bus stop beautification and Christmas decorating contests and witness how our community could create more vibrant and safer facilities for our students while spreading the holiday spirit around the islands.

Growing up in CK, each village had a commissioner who made sure that we kept our homes clean. We also had only one sanitation expert then, and every time he announced that there would be an inspection in the village, CK residents can be seen scrubbing the dirt from their properties. Restrooms used to be located outside the house, so we would use diesel to get rid of the heavy stains on the walls and floors. Nobody wanted to get a citation from the sanitation department back then.

Today, only one mayor is in charge of all the villages, and it's been a challenge for our staff to keep the villages clean and provide safer and well-maintained facilities for both residents and tourists. We are doing our very best to attend to every village's needs, but we could use some help. This Saturday, college students from the Rotaract group are holding a village cleanup starting at the William S. Reyes Elementary School to the Susupe Lake, and down to Sugar Dock Beach. My staff will be providing the equipment to support their activity and the Dog Control Program will ensure that they are kept safe from stray dogs.

The weekend village cleanup drive and the MVP Campaign highlight the cooperation and assistance that we need to create a better community for everyone. I encourage village leaders, parents, students, business owners, and all members of our community to support the MVP Campaign and take pride and ownership in transforming our villages. Hosting islandwide improvement projects is critical in our efforts to revive our tourism industry. Most importantly, it's essential in making our villages better places to live for all of us who call The Marianas home.

Let's work together and make the Marianas an MVP—a must-visit paradise.

For more information about the Marianas Village Pride Campaign, visit the GCEA website at cnmieconomy.com, engage on Facebook and Instagram (@cnmigov.economy), or contact them at gceacnmi@gmail.com.

CNMI's COVID total now 269

By JOSHUA SANTOS
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REPORTER

The Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. announced yesterday that one incoming traveler tested positive for COVID-19, bringing the CNMI's total to 269. In Guam, the island's Joint Information Center announced the island's 196th COVID-19-related death and reported that there are currently 66 individuals in Guam who are hospitalized with COVID-19. Of the 66, 35 are unvaccinated, the JIC reported.

CHCC said yesterday that the CNMI's latest case was identified by travel screening and confirmed positive through arrival testing on Sept. 29. The traveler has since been quarantined and is being actively monitored, and CHCC's contact tracing team has already begun reaching out to those who were in closest contact with the traveler. CHCC also said yesterday that there are currently no active COVID-19-related hospitalizations.

Guam's 196th COVID-19-related death was an unvaccinated 59-year-old male with underlying health conditions. He was a known positive case and was pronounced dead on arrival at the Guam Memorial Hospital on Sept. 28.

Guam Gov. Leon Guerrero said that every life lost to COVID-19 is "one too many," and that Guam must use all the tools available to the island to combat the virus.

"Each person that we lose to COVID-19 is one too many, and our hearts go out to their families and friends during their time of grieving. In this fight, we must use all the tools at our disposal, including masks, social distancing, vaccination, and even COVID-19 treatment," said Leon Guerrero.

CCC investigations manager resigns

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

Commonwealth Casino Commission's Enforcement and Investigations manager Vicente B. Babauta has resigned, leaving the commission with just 12 employees now, including executive director Andrew Yeom.

Yeom disclosed at the CCC board's regular meeting Wednesday that Babauta's resignation last week, together with that of compliance agent Marc Venus, means that they are now down to 12 staff as of that day.

Saipan Tribune learned that Babauta had returned to the Office of the Attorney General, where he had previously worked as chief investigator of the Attorney General's Office Investigative Division.

Babauta

Babauta completed casino gaming trainings such as the Bank Secrecy Act, anti-money laundering, regulating land-based casinos, pre-licensing financial and background investigations, casino crime investigation, and the 2019 World Gaming Protection Conference, according to CCC's website.

Yeom said he designated CCC special agent Thelma Mizer to be the acting manager of the Division of Enforcement and Investigations and Division of Permit and Licensing for the next 90 days.

Last July, when CCC legal counsel Michael Ernest resigned, the commission was then left with only 14 staff.

From 39 employees last May, CCC's number of employees has dwindled due to the termination of several employees as a result of budget constraint and resignation of others.

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10:00 AM - 2:00 PM
Paid for by the Committee to Elect Grace "Pitu" Sablan Vaiagae.

3-year-old's family to speak during Laniyo's sentencing

The Superior Court is giving family members of the deceased 3-year-old boy a chance to address Stacey Laniyo, the child's guardian who was found guilty of child abuse following his death, during her sentencing that will take place on Oct. 15.

In his order last Wednesday, Superior Court Associate Judge Joseph Camacho said the court will give ample time at the sentencing hearing for the child's family members to speak if they wish to address the court to clear up any confusion.

This was ordered because an aunt of the child who testified during Laniyo's trial was reportedly not aware that the child had died from an unrelated internal infection and she had wrongly assumed that the child died from being hit on the leg by a broom.

The judge stated in his order that the court will hold a sentencing hearing for Laniyo on Oct. 15, at 2:30pm. However, before the sentencing, Camacho scheduled a motion hearing on the defendant's motion for a new trial on the same day at 10am.

The court scheduled both hearings for the same day to avoid unnecessary delays, urging the lawyers to focus on facts when they argue the motion for a new trial.

Camacho reminded the parties that the death of the 3-year-old boy was not a homicide case but a child abuse case and to focus on that fact during the hearing. "This case is not about a homicide, that is why the Office of the Attorney General did not file murder or manslaughter charges," he said.

The judge also noted that two doctors examined the child, and an autopsy confirmed that the child died from an internal stomach and throat infection totally unrelated to a physical strike to his leg.

"This case is about child abuse regarding the defendant, Stacey Laniyo, hitting a young child with a broomstick. The incident of the broomstick happened many days before the child died from the unrelated internal infection. As tragic as the death of the child [was], the medical testimony is clear—the death of the child was not caused by the strike to his leg by the broomstick," he stated.

Laniyo and her partner, Lynn Fitial, were arrested following the death of the 3-year-old boy in March 2020. The boy was an adopted son of Fitial and was in the care of Laniyo. As for Fitial, the prosecution said she failed to provide medical care for the boy resulting in his death.

Laniyo and Fitial were each charged with one count of child abuse. The court granted their request to have separate trials.

Following a jury trial in June, Laniyo, was found guilty of one count of child abuse. ***(Kimberly B. Esmores)***

Charges against man who died while awaiting trial dismissed

The U.S. District Court for the NMI has dismissed the charges filed against a man involved in a CNMI Only Transitional Worker visa fraud case who died while awaiting trial.

In her order filed Wednesday, U.S. District Court for the NMI Chief Judge Ramona Manglona granted the prosecution's motion to dismiss with prejudice the case of Barrie James Ladd, who passed away last Sept. 22. Ladd's jury trial was initially scheduled for Oct. 5 but his trial date has been vacated as a result of the court's order to dismiss the case.

"Before the court is the United States' motion to dismiss this case due to the passing of the defendant on Sept. 22. For cause shown, the motion is granted and the court hereby orders this matter dismissed with prejudice," she stated.

Dismissing a case with prejudice means it can no longer be re-filed.

Assistant U.S. Attorney Garth Backe, the prosecutor in this case, filed the motion for the federal court to dismiss the case against Ladd.

According to court documents, Ladd was charged with one count of conspiracy to defraud the U.S. government. He was the owner of Misamis Construction Saipan Ltd., and was represented by attorney Colin Thompson.

The second superseding indictment stated that Misamis Construction Saipan Ltd. submitted a petition for a CW-1 visa falsely and fraudulently representing that a full-time employer-employee relationship would exist between Misamis and Hiron Mollah, when in fact, no such relationship was intended and the primary purpose of the application was to obtain legal status for Mollah.

Mollah was also charged with one count of conspiracy to defraud the U.S. The case was later dropped. ***(Kimberly B. Esmores)***

A NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS SOCIAL SERVICE
JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

KARIDAT
Catholic Charities - Diocese of Chalan Kanoa

(1) SHELTER WORKER - PART TIME
(1) SHELTER WORKER - FULL TIME

For more information, job description and application can be obtained from Karidat main office at Sister Remedios Community Center, Chalan Kanoa.

DOCUMENTS REQUIRED: Complete application form, copy of diploma, resume/bio-data; current police clearance within 6 months and a copy of valid CNMI driver's license.

NO PHONE INQUIRIES PLEASE.
CLOSING DATE: FRIDAY, OCTOBER 1, 2021 AT 4:00PM

NEW WAVE DENTAL

Dental Assistant Needed
New (Full-Time)
*applicants with lab skills preferred

$15-25/hr. call 233-3300 for info, or drop off CV at New Wave Dental

PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY
COMMONWEALTH HEALTHCARE CORPORATION
REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP)
RFP21-CHCC/CGC-CCP-002
SUBMISSION DEADLINE: OCTOBER 11, 2021 TIME: 10:00AM (CHST)

"OFFICE LEASE – SAIPAN"

INTERESTED PARTIES CAN DOWNLOAD THIS REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL FROM THE CHCC WEBSITE [WWW.CHCC.GOV.MP]. ONCE AT THE SITE, NAVIGATE TO **REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS** TAB ON THE LEFT NAVIGATION BAR. CLICK ON THE URL FOR THIS RFP. YOU WILL BE REQUIRED TO ENTER DATA TO ALLOW US TO TRACK ALL REQUESTS FOR THIS OPPORTUNITY.

THE CHCC RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY AND ALL PROPOSAL AND TO WAIVE ANY IMPERFECTIONS IN ANY PROPOSAL, IF TO DO SO SHALL BE IN THE INTEREST OF THE CHCC. ALL PROPOSALS SHALL BECOME THE EXCLUSIVE PROPERTY OF THE COMMONWEALTH HEALTHCARE CORPORATION.

/S/ ESTHER L. MUNA
CHCC CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

/S/ CORA P. ADA
DIRECTOR OF PROCUREMENT & SUPPLY

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COMMONWEALTH ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
P.O. Box 502149, Saipan MP 96950 | Tel: (670) 234-6245/6293/7145/7146 | Fax: (670) 235-7147 | www.developcnmi.com

NOTICE OF A PUBLIC HEARING

OCTOBER 1, 2021

ON AN APPLICATION FOR A QUALIFYING CERTIFICATE AUTHORIZING THE ABATEMENT AND REBATE OF CERTAIN CNMI TAXES

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE that:

A. ***Public hearing.*** In accordance with the Investment Incentive Act of 2000, as amended, and pursuant to the rule-making procedures of the Administrative Procedures Act, the Commonwealth Economic Development Authority (CEDA) will conduct a public hearing at the *New Cafeteria Building, next to Building D, Marianas High School, Bwaay Lane, Susupe, Saipan*, on *Friday, October 1, 2021*, at *5:00 p.m.*, on the application of *Marshall Holdings CNMI LLC*, Applicant for a Qualifying Certificate, which request is for tax relief by way of abatement and rebate of CNMI taxes in consideration of Applicant's proposed *$6.447 million for solar energy production, inter-island ocean transport, import/export and eco-tourism.* All pursuant to the Investment Incentive Act of 2000, as amended, and as set out in the Applicant's application for a Qualifying Certificate.

B. ***Nature of hearing.*** This hearing shall be open to the public. Oral or written statements will be received from anyone wishing to testify thereat, which statement will be incorporated into the records of the hearing.

C. ***Further Information.*** For further information, please contact CEDA at the above telephone numbers or visit its office at the CEDA Building, Beach Road, Oleai, Saipan.

/s/ Manuel A. Sablan
Executive Director

COMMONWEALTH PORTS AUTHORITY
Main Office: SAIPAN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT
2nd Floor Arrival Bldg.
P.O. BOX 501055 • SAIPAN • MP 96950
Phone: (1-670) 237-6500/1 • Fax: (1-670) 234-5962
E-mail Address: cpa.admin@pticom.com •
Website: www.cnmiports.com

JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT # 04-2021
Opening date: September 20, 2021 Closing date: October 08, 2021

Positions: (1) Receptionist/Secretary (Saipan)
(1) Custodial/Maintenance-I (CPA Rota)

Employment Application must be accompanied with a copy of all required diploma/certificates and/or official sealed transcripts, original copy of recent police record not more than six (6) months old, original copy of U.S. Department of Defense Form DD214 for retired members or veterans of our Armed Forces, and other documents as required for the position. Public Law 11-70 requires that all male applicants age 18 to 25 years old must submit documentation evidencing his registration with the Federal Selective Service System. All applications and required documents must be submitted to the ***CPA Administration Office, 2nd Floor Arrival Building, Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport or CPA Administration Office Tinian International Airport or Benjamin Taisacan Manglona International Airport.*** Failure to provide any of the required documents will result in automatic disqualification. Certain vacancies may require written and/or physical test. Selected applicants will be subjected to pre-employment drug screening, 10-year Criminal History Record Check and 49 CFR Part 1542.209(d) Requirements. CPA reserves the right to waive or implement other qualifications to meet its needs. The deadline for submission of applications and required documents to the CPA Administration Office (Saipan) or at the Tinian International Airport or Benjamin Taisacan Manglona International Airport is no later than **5:00 P.M. on Friday, October 08, 2021.**

Detailed information on qualifications and position descriptions for the above positions may be picked up along with the application form from Monday-Friday, 8:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M., except on holidays, at the CPA Administration Office (2nd Floor) of the Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport, Arrival Terminal or CPA Admin. Office at the Tinian International Airport or at the Benjamin Taisacan Manglona International Airport. For additional information, please contact the CPA Human Resources Office by email at lorna.tenorio@cnmiports.com or by phone at (670)237-6500.

CPA is an Equal Opportunity Employer and CPA hires those who are legally entitled to employment in the CNMI.

CHRISTOPHER S. TENORIO
Executive Director

Retired chief justice Dela Cruz pens new book about CNMI

Retired chief justice Jose S. Dela Cruz announced yesterday the publication of his second book about the Northern Mariana Islands. It will be available this November. The book recounts the experience of the people of the CNMI during the past decade—from 2010 until 2020. It discusses several of the fundamental issues affecting the growth and development of the islands, before and after the turn of the 20th century.

Many of the issues confronting the CNMI relate to its insular economy, its small population, the lack of capital and natural resources, and the remote location of the islands from major urban centers. The book also discusses several of the political and self-governance issues that have arisen since internal self-government began in 1978.

The first major issue confronting the CNMI has been the continuing decline in its economy since the end of the 20th century. By 2006, the islands had fallen into a major economic recession and, to the present, has had a very difficult time resuscitating its economy. The year before then, the CNMI economy took a major hit with the departure of the CNMI garment industry in 2005. And by 2010, literally all the major airlines servicing the CNMI, including its visitor and garment industries, had also left due to the islands' dismal economy.

Aside from the continuing economic recession, the CNMI also experienced its first major political crisis with the federal criminal conviction of a sitting lieutenant governor in 2009. A few years later, in 2013, the sitting governor was impeached by the CNMI House of Representative and he resigned from office a week later. In 2015, he was criminally convicted for several of the same offenses that he had been impeached for.

Dela Cruz's new book also discusses the hasty enactment by the CNMI Legislature in 2014 of the first casino industry legislation for the island of Saipan. In their zeal to revive the local economy, the late governor, Eloy Inos, and the leaders of the CNMI House and Senate decided to establish a casino industry for the island Saipan. But in order to entice prospective investors from Macao and Hong Kong, the legislation provided for the award of an exclusive casino license to a single casino operator for a long term—40 years. The book describes in some detail the rise and fall of the new Saipan casino industry. Five years later—toward the end of 2019, the exclusively owned and operated Saipan casino started to experience financial problems, both in terms of operating the casino and in terms of completing the construction of the 14-story casino structure.

Dela Cruz' new book about the Northern Mariana Islands also discusses some of the key issues relating to the islands' political relationship with the United States, its adopted mother country. For example, it discusses the basic constitutional issue of whether the CNMI is or is not "a part of the United States." It discusses the 1901 U.S. Supreme Court ruling in the Insular Cases that the U.S. Constitution does not apply "of its own force" to U.S. territories. Because of that ruling, only those provisions of the U.S. Constitution that are expressly listed in the Northern Marianas Covenant were made applicable to the CNMI through the Covenant agreement.

It is the hope of the author that his new book will help preserve and enhance the knowledge of all who are interested in the political and economic history of the CNMI. It is also the hope of the author that our leaders in government will learn from our past experience and not repeat the mistakes that we have made. ***(PR)***

Marianas Agupa has new cultural heritage, English segments

The Marianas Agupa Talk Show announced yesterday a modified segment every Saturday from 9am to 11am beginning on Oct. 2, 2021, on Magic 100.3 FM and simulcast streaming on Tunein Radio, YouTube and Facebook Live.

The show will feature the following during the first and third week of each month:

- 9am to 9:30am: Chamorro News-CNMI and World News with Glenn H Manglona
- 9:30am to 9:40am: Guam News with Peter J. Santos, contributor
- 9:40am to 9:55am: Tinian Issue with former senator David M. Cing, co-founder.
- 9:55am to 10:10am: Chamorro medicine/Rota issue with Timothy M. San Nicolas
- 10:10am to 10:15am: Chamorro Story with Isidoru T. Cabrera, contributor.
- 10:15am to 10:30am: Public participation; call-in from the audience.
- 10:30am to 10:45am: New English segment on government, economy and education with Ambrose Bennett, analyst/contributor.
- 10:45am to 11:00am: Public participation; call-in from the audience.

The show will also feature a cultural heritage show every second and fourth week of each month:

- 9am to 9:30am: Chamorro News-CNMI and World News with Glenn H Manglona
- 9:30am to 9:40am: Guam News with Peter J. Santos, contributor
- 9:40am to 9:55am: Tinian issue with former senator David M. Cing, co-founder.
- 9:55am to 10am: Preview and introduction of the Cultural Heritage Show
- 10am to 10:45am: Cultural heritage topic with local cultural expert
- 10:45am to 11:00am: Public participation; call-in from the audience. A live online polling on the subject will be made available for all active listeners.

Should any live guest appearance on the show is scheduled, it will be announced on the preceding Saturday.

The show is from 9am to 11am on Magic 100.3 FM. Listeners on Saipan, Tinian and Rota and those listening via internet can stream the show at https://tunein.com/radio/KWAW-FM-1003-s43718/ and those listening via YouTube and Facebook are encouraged to take part via text and/or call in and ask questions during the show. Direct to studio at 234-5929 or use Marianas Agupa Facebook account via instant messaging or 670-287-4536. ***(PR)***

COMMUNITY BRIEFS

4.7-magnitude quake in Pagan region

At 12:08pm on Sept. 30 2021, a report of a 4.7-magnitude earthquake occurred at 18.406°N 145.950°E in the Pagan region. Currently, there are no tsunami warnings or advisories that were issued by the Pacific Tsunami Warning Center. For more information, contact the CNMI EOC State Warning Point at 237-8000. ***(PR)***

UOG Regent Nominating Council meeting

The regular meeting of the University of Guam Regent Nominating Council will be held at 10am on Thursday, Oct. 7, via Zoom. The meeting will be publicly accessible by registering for Zoom access at https://zoom.us/j/96297027870.

A broadcast of the meeting via video livestream will be available on the UOG YouTube channel at https://www.youtube.com/uogtritons.

The University of Guam complies with Guam Public Law 36-34 changes to the Open Government Law and Guam Public Law 24-109 with reference to the provisions and requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act. For special accommodations, contact the ADA coordinator at 735-2244 or (TTY) 735-2243. Live closed captioning is available through a website link provided within the online meeting. ***(PR)***

MARK SCOGGINS
SCOGGINS LAW OFFICE, LLC
2nd Floor, MIC Building, Chalan Monsignor Guerrero
San Jose Village
P.O. Box 501127, Saipan, MP 96950-1127
Telephone Nos.: (670) 234-7455 / 7427
Facsimile No.: (670) 234-7256
Attorney for Petitioner.

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

In Re The Estate of BONIFACIO JONES CASTRO, Deceased.) Civil Action No. 21-0269) **NOTICE OF HEARING / NOTICE TO CREDITORS**) Date: October 21, 2021 Time: 10:00 a.m. Judge: Hon. Joseph N. Camacho

TO: THE HEIRS, GENERAL PUBLIC AND CREDITORS OF THE DECEDENT OR OF HIS ESTATE

Notice is hereby given that the Petitioner, Rosita Jones Castro, has filed a Petition For Probate of Will and Letters Testamentary in the above-entitled Estate proceeding pursuant to Rule 15, Com. R. Prob.

A hearing on the petition will be conducted by the Court on **Thursday, October 21, 2021 at 10:00 a.m.** in Courtroom 220A, Superior Court. All persons interested are hereby notified to appear at the hearing and show cause, if any, why the order should not be made.

Pursuant to Rule 21, Com. R. Prob., notice is hereby given to all creditors of the Decedent or his Estate that they must file their claims with the Clerk of Court within sixty (60) days of the publication of this notice. A copy of the claim of any creditor should be sent to Attorney Mark Scoggins at the above indicated address. Reference is hereby made to the petition for further particulars.

Dated: September 27, 2021

/S/ HON. JOSEPH N. CAMACHO
Associate Judge, CNMI Superior Court

Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
BOARD OF PROFESSIONAL LICENSING
P.O. Box 502078, Bldg., 1242 Pohnpei Court
Capitol Hill, Saipan, MP 96950
Tel No: (670) 664-4809 Fax: (670) 664-4814
Email: cnmi@cnmibpl-hcplb.net
Website: cnmibpl-hcplb.net

Pursuant to P. L. 8-41, Section 11, Governor Ralph Torres and Lt. Governor Arnold I. Palacios, through the Board of Professional Licensing (BPL) are hereby giving notice that it will hold its quarterly board meeting on ***Wednesday, October 06, 2021 at 8:30a.m.*** on Saipan. The meeting will be held at the Governor's Office Conference Room, Capitol Hill, Saipan.

AGENDA

I. Meeting Call to Order
II. Determination of Quorum
III. Review and Adoption of Agenda
IV. Review and Adoption of Minutes - (from June 11, 2021)
V. Public Comments
VI. Chairman's Report
  • NCEES 2021 Annual Business ZOOM Meeting
VII. Director's Report
  • Financial Report
  • NCARB MBE Committee Member
  • Current Engineers, Architects, Land Surveyors, and Landscape Architects Regulations
VIII. Investigator's Report
IX. Communications from the Governor's Office & Legislature
  A. Governor's Office
  B. Legislature
X. Old Business
  • Update on the Appraisal Regulations Ad Hoc Committee
XI. Executive Session: The Board may vote to meet in executive session to consult with counsel with pending or anticipated legal matters.
XII. New Business
XIII. Applications for Board's Review
XIV. Miscellaneous Business
XV. Announcements
  A. Next Meeting Date
  B. Adjournment of Meeting

DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE
US PASSPORT ACCEPTANCE FACILITY

NOTICE OF OFFICE RELOCATION

The U.S. Passport Acceptance Facility under the Department of Finance is relocating its office to the 1st floor of the Horiguchi Building, Kopa Di Oru St, Garapan on Monday, October 4th, 2021. Our normal office hours are:

Monday to Friday
7:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.
12:30 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.

For more information, please call 664-4760/61/62. You can also access forms and documents or Passport Help on our web page at https://finance.gov.mp/passport.php

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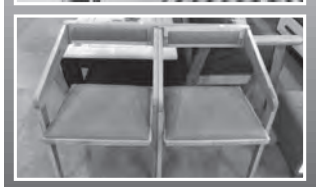

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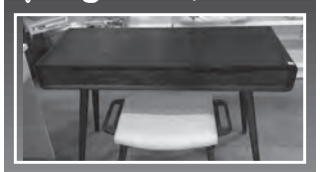
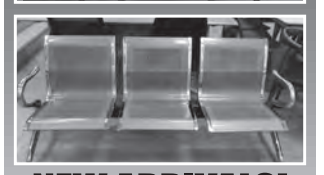
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PSS Co-Op gets 300 free transit passes from COTA

The Commonwealth Office of Transit Authority is providing 300 complimentary transit passes for CNMI Public School System high school students on the island of Saipan who are currently enrolled in their Cooperative Education program, more popularly known as Co-Op.

Special assistant for Public Transportation Alfreda Camacho Maratita said the free passes will provide Co-Op students a reliable ride going to their workplaces where they intend to obtain on-the-job experience. At the same time, by teaching them how to use public transportation, they can become future transit users, she said.

"With these passes, it is our hope that the students will avail of our reliable, safe, and secure transportation to get them where they need to go for a successful on-the-job experience through the CNMI PSS Co-Op program and that these same students will learn the benefits of public transportation and become COTA's future consumers," Maratita said.

The Co-Op is an elective class available in all of the CNMI's high schools. PSS works with private companies so that students taking this class are exposed to careers they might be interested in pursuing. It also allows them to gain on-the-job exposure and experience.

Special assistant for Public Transportation Alfreda Camacho Maratita, sixth from left, together with Commonwealth Office of Transit Authority employees and CNMI Public School System officials led by Board of Education chair Andrew L. Orsini, fourth from left, show off the 300 complimentary transit passes that will benefit students enrolled in the Cooperative Education program of PSS. CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Merrick Cabrera, a COTA transit safety officer and former Co-Op program participant, expressed how beneficial these free rides will be for students. "During my time in the Co-Op program, there were instances where it would be difficult to find a ride to and from work, since I did not have a vehicle of my own. This partnership will help alleviate some of the worries that students might have about getting to work and encourage more students to participate in the program."

Gov. Ralph DLG Torres is thankful for the support that this partnership will provide for CNMI students. "The assistance that COTA is giving our Co-Op high school students will offer opportunities for those who have difficulty in finding transportation and getting to their off-campus job training. With this, our high school students in the Co-Op program will be able to avail of the safe and reliable transportation that COTA provides."

COTA's transit operators and transit information specialists are Passenger Assistance Safety and Sensitivity-certified from the nationally recognized Community Transportation Association of America. COTA's entire fleet is highly maintained and serviced for the safety of all those who choose to take public transportation.

Those who are not participating in the Co-Op program can make reservations by calling COTA's One Call/One Click Transportation Information Resource Center at (670) 664-2690 one to two days in advance to schedule your desired reservation. Hours of operations on weekdays are from 6:30am to 10pm and weekends /holidays from 6:30am to 8pm. Rides are $3 each way for students (present valid student ID upon boarding), veterans and their families, children (ages 4-11), the elderly, and persons with disabilities. For general riders, rides are $5 each way. Children ages 3 and under are free.

For more information, visit www.cota.gov.mp. ***(PR/ Saipan Tribune)***

The Beta Lambda Psi Chapter of Northern Marianas College's Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society inducted 65 new members on Wednesday, Sept. 29, 2021, at the Pacific Islands Club-Saipan. NMC

NMC's Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society inducts new members

Sixty-five students from Northern Marianas College pledged to distinguish themselves through academic excellence by contributing to the community and the Commonwealth through various community service and leadership activities as new members and officers of the Beta Lambda Psi Chapter of Phi Theta Kappa or PTK International Honor Society.

The new members of the PTK Honor Society were inducted on Wednesday, Sept. 21, 2021, at the Pacific Islands Club.

In order to qualify for membership in Phi Theta Kappa, students must distinguish themselves by maintaining a 3.5 cumulative grade point average, in addition to serving and contributing to the community through various community service and leadership activities.

"The [advisers] would like to recognize and applaud our newly-inducted members and officers for their hard work and commitment to leadership, scholarship, service, and fellowship. And to their family members and friends, we thank you for being a strong support system to our Kappans," said PTK adviser Kaelani Demapan.

"In fact, it has been over two years since we revitalized our Phi Theta Kappa local chapter after Super Typhoon Yutu and since then, our chapter has seen a tremendous increase in membership with about 284 lifetime members," Demapan said. "We look forward to recognizing more and more scholars in the years to come."

The PTK honor society also inducted its new officers: Tahani I. Mafnas (president), Chloette Cabrera Villazon (vice president), Emirina Luisa Fernandez Chong (treasurer), Kierah Kisha Ilesiuglam Lee (recording secretary), Laurina Sebaklim (public relations secretary), and Laealdrie Jesslynne Deleon Guerrero Sablan (membership secretary).

In her closing remarks at the induction ceremony, incoming PTK President Tahani Mafnas told her fellow Kappans that being inducted into the Phi Theta Kappa Honor society is a milestone.

"We are proud of all of you," Mafnas said. "You all are more than just a part of an honor society but a part of a family, a family who supports your achievements, goals, and advocates for you every step of the way. We are the Phi Theta Kappa family and we are proud to see our family continuously grow."

NMC president Dr. Galvin Deleon Guerrero said the college is very proud of the new inductees. "It is great to see PTK's membership increase every year," Deleon Guerrero said. "Congratulations to all the new inductees. I look forward to hearing more about each of the inductees' successes and achievements in the years to come."

Established by Missouri two-year college presidents in 1918, the PTK Honor Society serves to recognize and encourage the academic achievement of two-year college students and provide opportunities for individual growth and development through honors, leadership, and service programming.

Currently, PTK is the largest honor society in American higher education with more than 2.5 million members and 1,275 chapters located in fifty United States and territories as well as Canada and Germany. ***(NMC)***

Most CW-1 employers must file required semiannual report

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services reminds CNMI employers of Transitional Workers—more commonly referred to as CW-1 workers—that, if you have a currently-approved CW-1 petition with a validity period of six months or more, you must file Form I-129CWR, Semiannual Report for CW-1 Employers, with USCIS every six months after the petition validity start date.

Employers use this report to certify the continued employment and payment of each worker under the terms and conditions of the approved petition.

Employers are not required to file Form I-129CWR if your petition has been withdrawn for all beneficiaries.

If you fail to comply with the semiannual reporting requirement, USCIS may revoke an approved petition or deny subsequent petitions. To avoid revocation or denial of future petitions, you must either:

File Form I-129CWR in accordance with the filing instructions located on the Form I-129CWR page; or

Submit a written request to withdraw your approved CW-1 petition to the California Service Center at the address located under the "Where to File" section of the Form I-129CW, Petition for a CNMI-Only Nonimmigrant Transitional Worker, page.

If you do not submit a written withdrawal of your approved CW-1 petition for all beneficiaries, you will remain subject to the semiannual reporting requirement for the duration of your petition's validity period, and you must comply with the reporting requirement before a new petition can be approved.

You are still subject to the semiannual reporting requirement even when:

- the worker was never admitted to the CNMI,
- the worker is no longer working for you,
- the worker may have subsequently changed status, or
- you are a CW-1 employer of a long-term worker and you previously submitted Form I-129CWR.

We will accept late-filed semiannual reports. You may submit all required reports, including any overdue reports, to USCIS even if the relevant filing window has passed. For example, if you are an employer of a CW-1 worker with start date of Oct. 1, 2019, who has never filed a semiannual report, USCIS may consider you to be in compliance if you file any semiannual reports that are overdue, and then timely file semiannual reports thereafter. If we revoke your CW-1 petition for failure to comply with the semiannual reporting requirement, you must still file any overdue semiannual reports before a new petition can be approved. Complying with this requirement will not have any effect on an already revoked petition, but will allow you to participate in the CW program in the future even if previous petitions were revoked.

USCIS established the semiannual report requirement in an interim final rule (IFR) implementing the Northern Mariana Islands U.S. Workforce Act of 2018. The IFR established that the semiannual report is required for all CW-1 petitions approved by USCIS with employment start dates beginning on or after Oct. 1, 2019, for a validity period of six months or more.

Employers can verify if USCIS received the Form I-129CWR by entering the receipt number of the approved Form I-129CW petition in Case Status Online. ***(PR)***

JKPL gives thanks for successful summer reading program

The Joeten-Kiyu Public Library is thankful to all its donors, sponsors, community partners, and volunteers for their support in contributing to a successful 2021 Summer Reading Program.

"It is through your generous and continued support that we continue to provide exciting and innovative programs and activities for the CNMI," the library said in a news statement last week.

This year's event was possible through the support and commitment of our major sponsors and community partners:

- **Champion Sponsors**: Bridge Capital, LLC
- **Leader Sponsors:** Tan Siu Lin Foundation, Atkins Kroll Toyota (Saipan), Chong's Corp., Hong Ye Corp., First Hawaiian Bank, E-Land Group, Triple J Saipan, Inc., Bank of Guam, MEGAbyte, and Pacific Advisory Services
- **Partner Sponsors:** Joeten Superstore, Kautz Glass Co., Islander Car Rental, Barny's Pizza, Modern Stationary
- **Benefactor Sponsors:** Lollipops, D&Q Saipan Co. Ltd, The Shack, Marianas Eye Institute, Saipan Seventh-Day Adventist Dental Clinic, Marianas Pacific Distributors Inc., Marianas Variety, Yuichiro's Printing, PEPS International, LLC
- **Friends Sponsors:** Divannie Tudela Torres, James Gebhard and family, Lao Lao Bay Golf and Resort, Healing Stone, J's Restaurant, Coca Cola Beverage Co. Micronesia, Eats Easy, Ginen Saipan, Smart Start Nurturing Center, Pacific Amusement Inc., Latte Built Fitness and Nutrition, MITA Travel, Hyatt Regency Saipan, Saipan Shipping, Co., Gold's Gym, Hardt Eye Clinic and Diabetes Education Center, CNMI Books and Resource Center, Jodanic Woodworks, CTSI Logistics, Oh My Grill!, Trader's Insurance, and Eugene Jordan Borja Tenorio
- **Supporters Sponsors:** Joeten Ace Hardware, Pacifica Insurance Underwriter's Inc., PHI Pharmacy, Herman's Modern Bakery, Aqua Resort Club, Kinpachi Restaurant, Godfather's Bar, Regal Cinema, Himawari, Galaxy II Snack Bar, I Love Saipan, Ete Café, Shirley's Coffee Shop, McDonald's of Saipan, and Marianas Creations
- **Community partners:** Office of the Governor, Collaborative Summer Library Program, CNMI Public School System, AmeriCorps Program, Lady Diann Torres Foundation, CNMI Girl Scouts, NMI Museum of History and Culture, Saipan Cares for Animals, DCCA's Division of Youth Services, Stellar Marianas, American Library Association, Young Adult Library Services Association, Northern Marianas Humanities Council's Motheread/Fatheread CNMI, 4H Marianas, CNMI Department of Corrections, CNMI Department of Lands and Natural Resources, CNMI Division of Fish and Wildlife, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Brown Tree Snake Program, Saipan Mayor's Office, Rota Mayor's Office, Office of the Mayor of Tinian and Aguigan, and volunteers. ***(PR)***

VINCENT J. SEMAN, CNMI Bar No. F-0361
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IN THE SUPERIOR COURT FOR THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

IN MATTER OF THE ESTATE OF MARIANO FAISAO MENDIOLA, Deceased.	PROBATE CASE NO. 21-0270 NOTICE OF HEARING ON PETITION TO PROBATE and NOTICE TO CREDITORS Date: Thurs, Oct. 28, 2021 Time: 10:00 am Judge: Joseph N. Camacho

TO: THE GENERAL PUBLIC, ANY HEIRS, CLAIMANTS, OR CREDITORS OF THE LATE MARIANO FAISAO MENDIOLA OR OF HIS ESTATE.

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that Petitioner, Patricia Mendiola Jetley, has petitioned the Superior Court of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands to issue Letters of Administration for the Estate of **MARIANO FAISAO MENDIOLA**, "Decedent". The attorney for Petitioner is Vincent J. Seman, Esq., whose address is JET Building, Suite 204, Chalan Pale Arnold, Gualo Rai, PO Box 10001 PMB 168, Saipan, MP 96950.

The hearing on the Petition to probate the Estate of Decedent by Petitioner is scheduled to be heard on Thursday, October 28, 2021 at 10:00 am before Judge, Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

All interested persons or entities should appear at this hearing. Any and all persons, creditors or entities having claims against the Decedent or his estate are hereby required by law to file their claims with the Clerk of Court within Sixty (60) days of the first publication, or the claim(s) will be barred. A copy of your claim should also be sent to VINCENT J. SEMAN, Esq. at his address herein-above indicated.

Dated this 29 September 2021.

By: /s/_____
CLERK OF COURT

NORTHERN MARIANAS COLLEGE
Procurement & Property Management Office
P.O. Box 501250 • Saipan, MP 96950 U.S.A.
Phone: (670) 234-5498 Ext. 6824 • Email: ppmo@marianas.edu

INVITATION FOR BIDS

NMC IFB 21-0005
INSTALLATION & RETROFIT OF COURTYARD OUTDOOR LEARNING SPACE
BLDG O.

Northern Marianas College is soliciting competitive sealed bids for the Installation and Retrofit of Courtyard outdoor learning space, Bldg. O, Saipan Campus.

The bid specifications and Scope of Work packet may be pick up at the **NMC Procurement Office, Bldg. P, commencing Friday, SEPTEMBER 17, 2021 between the hours of 9:00-11:30 a.m. and 1:00-4:00 p.m.** Electronic packet, please send a request to Anita Camacho @ ppmo@marianas.edu.

A Pre-bid meeting and Site visit is scheduled for 09:00am October 01, 2021, NMC Conference Room, attendance is not mandatory but is strongly recommended.

Hard copies Bid submission
Procurement & Property Management Office, Bldg. P,
As Terlaje Campus Saipan
Due Date and Time: 10:00am, October 08, 2021, ChST

Paid for by 100% Federal Funds through US Department of Education, Emergency Assistance to Institution of Higher Education Grant, award no. P938T190005. In accordance with Public Law 15-95 and as further amended by Public Law 15-118, Local Preference is not available to local businesses for this procurement.

This solicitation does not constitute an offer and does not obligate the College in any way. The College reserves the right to reject any and/or all bid offers for any reason and waive any defect in said bids, or cancel in part or its entirety this IFB, if it deems, in its sole discretion, it is in the best interest of the College.

/s/Anita Camacho
Procurement Manager

COMMONWEALTH PORTS AUTHORITY
CNMI GOVERNMENT

INVITATION FOR BID

PROJECT NO.: CPA-IFB-001-22
BIDS SUBMISSION DEADLINE: OCTOBER 29, 2021, TIME: 2:00 P.M.

PROCUREMENT OF ONE (1) UNIT HEAVY DUTY TRUCK FOR CPA SEAPORT POLICE

THE BID PACKAGE WHICH INCLUDES THE VEHICLE SPECIFICATIONS AND OTHER CONSIDERATION IS AVAILABLE FOR PICK UP BEGINNING OCTOBER 01, 2021 AT THE CPA ADMIN OFFICE, 2ND FLOOR, SAIPAN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT ARRIVAL BUILDING.

BIDDERS ARE TO SUBMIT ONE (1) ORIGINAL AND TWO (2) COPIES OF THE BIDS TO THE OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, 2ND FLOOR, ARRIVAL BUILDING, SAIPAN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT IN A SEALED ENVELOPE AND MARKED: **"PROJECT NO. CPA-IFB-001-22".** BIDDERS SHALL TAKE INTO CONSIDERATION ALL CHARGES ASSOCIATED WITH THIS PROCUREMENT BEFORE FINALIZING ITS BID.

THE PROVISIONS OF THE CPA PROCUREMENT REGULATIONS, NMIAC SECTION §40-50-1020, §40-50-1015, & §40-50-1025 PROHIBITING GRATUITIES, FINANCIAL INTEREST, KICKBACKS AND CONTINGENT FEES SHALL APPLY.

THE CPA RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY AND ALL BIDS AND WAIVE IMMATERIAL DEFECTS IF TO DO SO WOULD BE IN THE BEST INTEREST OF CPA.

CHRISTOPHER S. TENORIO
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR Date: _____

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM, OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS
Tel: (670) 664-2371 | Fax: (670) 664-2408 | Caller Box 10007, Saipan, MP 96950

INVITATION TO BID
ITB21-GOV-169

SUBMISSION DATE: 10:00 AM OCTOBER 15, 2021

RENOVATION OF BUILDING 1365 FOR THE COMMONWEALTH DISABILITY CENTER

Governor Ralph DLG. Torres and Lt. Governor Arnold I. Palacios, through the Capital Improvement Program (CIP) are soliciting sealed bids for the *Renovation of Building 1365 for the Commonwealth Disability Center* in Capitol Hill, Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI). This project will be funded by the 702 Covenant funding under the U.S. Department of Interior, Office of Insular Affairs.

The project package will be available in digital format only on **September 17, 2021** at the Capital Improvement Program Office, Office of the Governor, Juan A. Sablan Administration Building in Capitol Hill, Saipan, during regular working hours. **This project will require US Treasury Listed Payment and Performance Bonds.**

A mandatory Pre-Bid Conference will be held at the project site, Building 1365, located in Capitol Hill, Saipan, CNMI at **10:00 AM ChST October 4, 2021.** Proposers may request to participate via phone call or virtually five (5) days prior to the meeting scheduled. All attendees are required to use a face mask and exercise social distancing throughout the duration of the meeting.

Questions regarding this ITB may be sumitted via email to Ms. Sunny Aldan at sunny.aldan@gov.mp no later than **4:30 PM ChST October 8, 2021.** All Questions & Answers will be shared with all prospective bidders.

Bidders located outside of the CNMI must fill out and submit the Notice of Intent to Bid Form to the Director of Procurement Services no later than **10:00 AM October 15, 2021.**

THE PROVISIONS OF THE CNMI PROCUREMENT REGULATIONS, NMIAC SECTION 70-30.3-725 AND 70-30.3-730 PROHIBITING GRATUITIES, KICKBACKS, AND CONTINGENT FEES SHALL APPLY.

THE CNMI GOVERNMENT RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY AND ALL BIDS, OR PORTIONS THEREOF, AND WAIVE IMMATERIAL DEFECTS IF TO DO SO WOULD BE IN THE BEST INTEREST OF THE CNMI GOVERNMENT.

/S/ Ralph DLG. Torres
Governor, CNMI

/S/ Francisco C Aguon, Acting Director
CNMI Procurement Services

Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
Bureau of Environmental and Coastal Quality
Division of Coastal Resources Management
P.O. Box 501304, Saipan, MP 96950
Tel: (670) 664-8300; Fax: (670) 664-8315
www.dcrm.gov.mp

Eli D. Cabrera
Administrator

Richard V. Salas
Acting Director, DCRM

PUBLIC NOTICE

From the COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS
COASTAL MANAGEMENT PROGRAM
of the DIVISION OF COASTAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

DATE: October 1, 2021

NOTICE: The Bureau of Environmental and Coastal Quality (BECQ) Division of Coastal Resources Management (DCRM) is currently reviewing a federal consistency determination from the National Park Service (NPS) regarding shoreline stabilization of Smiling Cove Marina and Outer Cove Marina revetment structures. More information about the proposed activity can be accessed via the DCRM website at: https://dcrm.gov.mp/wp-content/uploads/crm/NPS-AMP-CZM-Federal-Consistency-Determination-FINAL-signed.pdf

Federal consistency is a provision of the Coastal Zone Management Act (CZMA) that requires federal actions that affect the coastal zone to be consistent to the maximum extent practicable with the enforceable policies of a state's federally approved coastal management program (CMP).

Comments on whether the project is consistent with the enforceable policies of the CNMI's CMP can be submitted to the Division of Coastal Resources Management at fedcon@dcrm.gov.mp.

This public notice has been published for compliance with 15 CFR § 930.42. DCRM is soliciting public comments for fifteen (15) days, starting on October 1, 2021 and ending on October 15, 2021. We welcome your feedback and thank you for your consideration.

Opinion

Hafa Adai!
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The Associated Press | Pacific Islands News Association

EDITORIAL

Wasted lives, wasted time, and $5.7 billion wasted on treating the unvaccinated

The costs of treating unvaccinated people for coronavirus infections were $5.7 billion between June and August of 2021, a new report from the nonpartisan Kaiser Family Foundation has concluded. In the world of health care, that might not be much. Americans spent about $3.8 trillion dollars on health care in 2019, so $5.7 billion represents just 0.15% of overall health care spending.

But in the world that most of us live in, $5.9 billion is a lot. It represents a staggering loss that didn't have to happen.

Since mid-April, safe and effective vaccines have been available without charge to virtually every American adult. Yet only 63% of Americans are fully vaccinated; 25% have yet to receive a single shot of the vaccine. In three Missouri counties, 75% of residents haven't had a single shot.

Those unvaccinated people fueled a huge surge in cases from June to August, a number that continued to grow in early September. The Kaiser study estimates that 530,000 adult coronavirus cases were admitted to American hospitals from June 1 to Aug. 31. Of them, the authors estimated that 86%—455,800 people—were unvaccinated.

Coronavirus hospitalizations doubled in July compared with June, the study found; they rose to 345,000 in August, up from 125,000 in July. In total, 287,000 hospitalizations from June through the end of August could have been prevented if more Americans were vaccinated, the study found. Those hospitalizations had an average cost of $20,000 each, which should be sobering news to the unvaccinated.

We've previously noted that insurance companies, which had waived deductibles and copayments for coronavirus treatments during the early part of the pandemic, were backing away from that policy. While the $20,000-per-case figure was being shared widely by insurance companies and the government, it will soon start hitting unvaccinated Americans in the pocketbook—as it should.

In case you don't have a calculator handy, a 15% copay on $20,000 works out to $3,000. A $20,000 hospital bill is just the tip of the iceberg. Every dollar spent on health care is a dollar that can't be spent on a competing need.

The $5.7 billion cost of treating people who likely wouldn't have been infected if vaccinated means $5.7 billion less to spend on education, or repairing crumbling infrastructure. It could have gone a long way toward providing high-speed internet to rural areas that are notoriously underserved.

And then there are all of the lost lives: the fathers and mothers who will not raise their children, the grandparents whose loss blew a hole in thousands of American families. Those costs are incalculable.

An even bigger waste from the failure to immunize all Americans is that the nation still cannot be done with this pandemic and return to normal. It's time for the unvaccinated to roll up their sleeves and stop wasting America's time and money. And patience.

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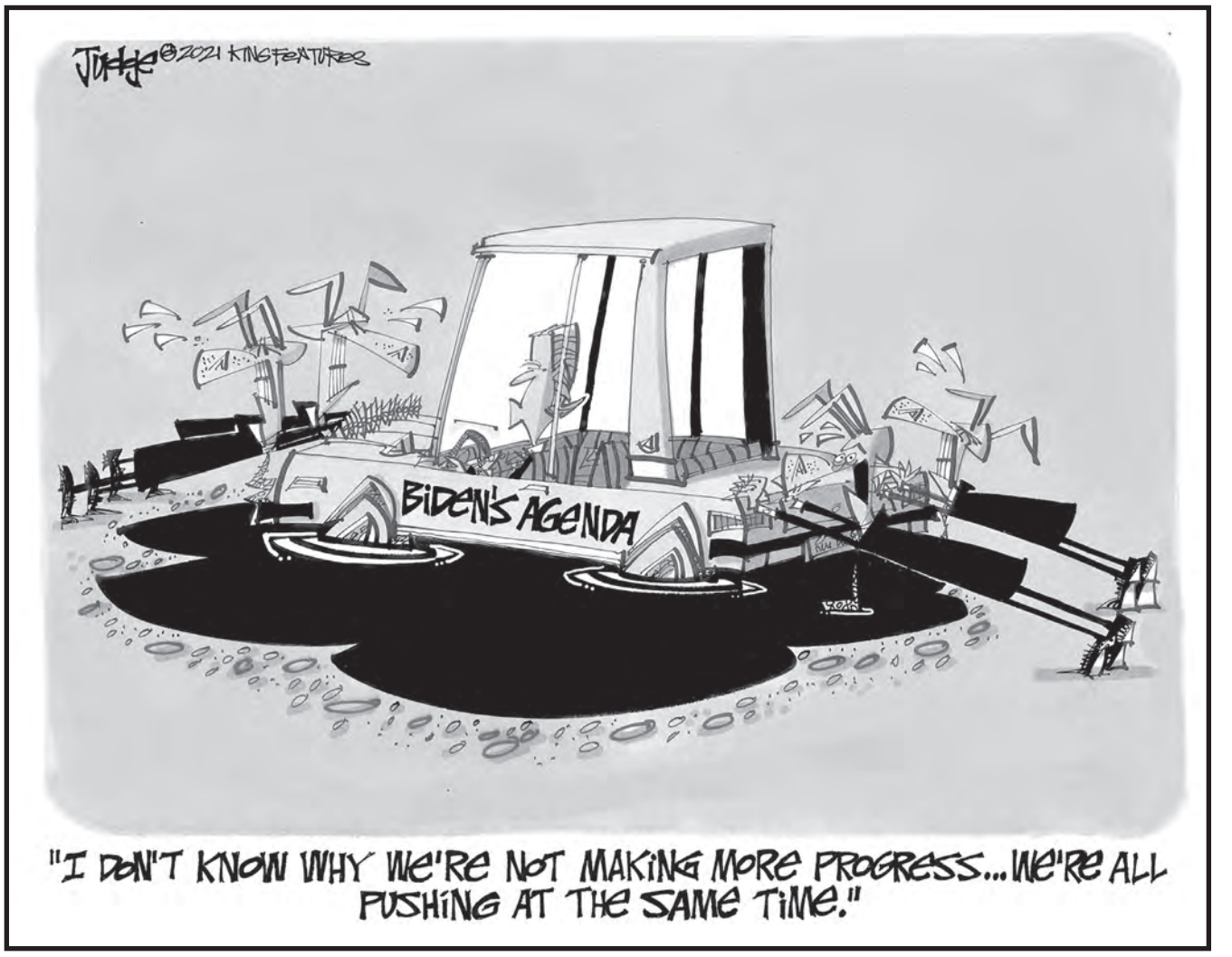


A lesson from Ebola in 2015 will be key to ending COVID-19

By DAVID HEYMANN, ASHISH JHA and EDWARD KELLEY
LOS ANGELES TIMES

"Too many lives have been lost. Families, communities and nations have been devastated. … Our marathon effort has been a success, but the last mile may be the most difficult path."

That was U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon in April 2015 speaking to world leaders about the Ebola crisis in West Africa. As President Joe Biden and his team asked heads of state and leaders of industry at a COVID-19 summit last week to make new commitments to end the latest pandemic, they all seemed to forget the very issue that Ban highlighted six years ago: the last mile.

The context for the two gatherings was quite different. In 2015 the question of how to strengthen health systems was an early focus in a hemorrhagic fever outbreak in a few countries that was deadly but relatively short-lived. Today, the world faces an active respiratory disease outbreak that after raging for almost two years is still killing more than 65,000 people a week.

Progress against the disease is limited largely because only 2% of people in the developing world have been vaccinated against COVID-19. At the same time, the rest of our health systems have been fundamentally disrupted. UNICEF and the World Health Organization have reported that disruptions in routine immunization have seen 23 million children missing standard vaccinations in 2020-21, the highest in a decade.

All of this means that most of our work to solve this pandemic is in front of us. Action is certainly and urgently needed on commitments of billions of doses, on therapies and oxygen to help save lives, and on the mechanisms to be put in place at the global level to support better future preparedness. But a crucial element is missing from the targets of last week's summit: How will we actually vaccinate, save lives and improve preparedness to reach the billions of people not well connected to effective health care systems?

On global vaccinations, current priorities for the campaign are to get 2.4 billion doses to the developing world by the end of 2021 to vaccinate 40% of the world. Every day, global partners try to give hope with photos of vaccine doses sitting on airport tarmacs. Yet to date, 70% of all vaccinations have been given by only five countries.

COVAX, the organization coordinating the worldwide COVID-19 vaccine campaign, had to slash its vaccination plans by 30% in September. WHO has stated that more than a third of African countries have major gaps in the ability to deliver vaccines to the district level because of broken "last mile" delivery systems, just as the secretary-general cited in countering Ebola back in 2015.

More striking, we do not have the syringes to vaccinate the world. Current estimates are that we will be at least 5 billion syringes short across the life of the COVID-19 vaccination campaign. In 1999, a joint policy from WHO, UNICEF and the United Nations Population Fund called on all partners to finance "not only the vaccines, but the safe administration of the vaccines."

Worryingly, most current donations to countries are being sent without syringes. Experts have estimated that if this syringe gap is not addressed, we could see 2 million to 3 million deaths from infections caused by syringe reuse.

Refocusing the world on the goal of "saving lives" now is also needed. Solutions to date have focused on the upstream purchase of commodities rather than the people providing care and vaccinating at the front line. If efforts to ramp up access to oxygen and personal protective equipment are going to have any effect, massive efforts must be made now at training and deployment of our front-line health workers. This must include finding ways to engage community health workers more integrally in vaccination efforts, while medical personnel support care for COVID-19.

Efforts to rebuild the disrupted systems are just starting. The debates started at last spring's World Health Assembly and will continue after this summit. By far the most contentious topic is how to scale up manufacturing. Again, we are focused on "first mile" issues and ignoring downstream questions of how countries can really manage the end of the vaccine supply chain, namely filling, finishing and distributing vaccinations safely to their populations, even those hardest to reach.

In March 2015, we all made commitments we thought would help create a world where an Ebola outbreak could not happen again. We failed as a global community partially because we forgot the most important part, the last mile. Let's not allow this summit's commitments to do the same.

David Heymann is a professor of infectious disease epidemiology at London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine. Ashish Jha is the dean of the Brown University School of Public Health. Edward Kelley is the chief global health officer of ApiJect Systems Corp., which focuses on injectable medicines.

EDITORIAL POLICY Letters to the editor must include the NAME, VILLAGE ADDRESS, and CONTACT NUMBER of the contributor. Letters that do not have these information will immediately be trashed. Contributions consisting of 500 words or less have more chances of getting published. The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to publish a contribution or not; the right to edit submissions for length, accuracy, and clarity; and the right to publish and distribute contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats. Submissions may be sent via snail mail to the 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, 96950; fax (670) 235-3740; e-mail to editor@saipantribune.com; or through our website at www.saipantribune.com.

Why the federal poverty line doesn't begin to tell the story of poverty in the US

By CELINE-MARIE PASCALE
Los Angeles Times

Celine-Marie Pascale is a professor of sociology at American University in Washington, D.C., and author of Living on the Edge: When Hard Times Become a Way of Life.

Recently released Census Bureau data show that more than 37 million people in America lived at or below the federal poverty line in 2020. That's 11.4% of the population, and a full percentage point higher than what it was in 2019.

But the federal poverty line doesn't begin to tell the story of poverty in the U.S.

Half of U.S. families struggle to make ends meet. They are part of what I call the "uncounted majority," people who have trouble paying basic bills even though their incomes aren't low enough to meet the official federal poverty threshold—currently $26,200 for a family of four or $12,760 for an individual.

I've witnessed this struggle firsthand while researching low-income communities over the last four years. In cities and towns from California to Kentucky, I met hundreds of working people—from a mix of racial backgrounds—whose real-life experiences highlight the arbitrariness of, and the problems with, the federal poverty line.

People such as Angel Perez, who lives in Oakland and works two part-time jobs for a local school district and helps his father paint houses—and earns less than $16,000 a year. Perez counts himself lucky to be able to live with his father. Otherwise, he would be among Oakland's more than 4,000 unhoused people.

In southeast Ohio, I commonly met people who worked multiple jobs and who still found it difficult to pay their bills. Michael Chase was one of them. Between two jobs, he works 45 to 60 hours a week and brings home just under $16,000 a year. Neither job comes with health insurance, sick leave or vacation time. He shares an apartment with three roommates—a situation he finds stressful—and still worries at times about making rent.

Yet Chase doesn't consider himself to be poor. Perhaps more important, neither does the government. In 2020, he was well above the federal poverty line for a single person.

Waiting tables in eastern Kentucky, Jenna Terry earns a pretax income of about $20,000. She lives with her boyfriend, Doug, a car salesman who brings in another $20,000. Neither of their employers offers sick time, vacation or health insurance. The couple have a young daughter, and the $40,000 they make together is nearly double the federal poverty line for a family of three.

Even so, they had trouble paying their monthly bills, which included a high-interest car loan. To reliably cover basic expenses, Terry's family would need an income of $53,818, according to the Economic Policy Institute.

Low-wage workers get lost in the gap between economic self-sufficiency and the federal poverty line, which is calculated using an outdated equation that may have never made sense. It is determined by comparing pretax cash income against a threshold that is three times the expected costs of groceries and then adjusted for family size.

In 2019, 53 million Americans, or 44% of the nation's workers ages 18 to 64 held low-wage jobs that paid a yearly median wage of $18,000.

According to available census data, roughly 51% of workers earn less than $35,000 per year, which is only slightly above the federal poverty line for a family of four—and less than they need to be able to afford a modest two-bedroom apartment. A recent survey found that, on average, a modest two-bedroom apartment at the national average fair market rent of $1,061 required an hourly wage of $20.40. This is an annual salary of $42,432.

Jobs with low wages, unreliable hours and a lack of benefits have come to dominate the U.S. economic landscape for workers and their families. The pandemic compounded this problem for low-wage workers whose work cannot be done remotely. In 2020, nearly 8 million low-wage workers lost their jobs, while others, such as those in meatpacking industries, were declared "essential" and forced to work in unsafe conditions.

Economic distress has shaped the lives of millions of workers for decades. Without savings, people are forced to rely on high-interest loans to cover ordinary but unforeseen expenses—car repairs, a dental problem, an illness. On an already inadequate budget, this creates a financial crisis that can drive low-wage workers deeper into debt.

Since 2010, the federal government has released a "supplemental poverty measure" that takes into account programs aimed at helping low-income families and individuals who are not included in the official poverty rate. This figure often makes the poverty rate go up, but in 2020 supplemental measures made it fall, from 11.4% to 9.1%. The Census Bureau credited this drop to the success of government stimulus payments meant to provide relief for economic hardships caused by COVID-19. Those payments have ended.

To a person, the low-wage workers I spoke with expected to work hard. But no one should expect to spend 60 hours a week working two jobs and still have difficulty paying basic bills.

The federal poverty line needs to be adjusted to reflect reality—and be based on the actual costs of housing, food, child care, health care, transportation and other necessities of daily life in various regions of the United States.

We need a measure that can account for the uncounted majority.

Can the Supreme Court be moved by abortion stories told by real women? We'll see

By ROBIN ABCARIAN
Los Angeles Times

In November 2017, a third-year Texas law student named Brittany Fowler, who was in a monogamous relationship and on oral contraceptives, discovered she was pregnant.

She later learned that an antibiotic she had been prescribed for an unrelated infection had caused her oral contraception to fail.

"My doctor," she wrote in a friend-of-the-court brief filed with the U.S. Supreme Court this month, "didn't warn me that the antibiotic might interfere with my birth control, and it didn't occur to me that it might be a consequence."

Choosing to end the pregnancy was not difficult; her projected due date was the same day she was scheduled to take her bar exam. She had already committed to a clerkship and a cross-country move after graduation.

Her abortion, she wrote, "was the right choice for me."

Shelby Vaughn had just turned 18 and was finishing a military training cycle at Ft. Sam Houston in Texas when she discovered she was pregnant.

"When I informed my drill sergeant I was pregnant and wanted an abortion, he ignored my request and said things like I needed to take responsibility for my actions and accept I'd be a mother soon."

She ended the pregnancy anyway, and when she returned to training, Vaughn said, she was treated poorly by superiors and peers alike. "I know what it's like to have your choice and constitutional rights violated by the very institution that is sworn to defend and uphold the U.S. Constitution," she wrote.

These stories are two of the 26 contained in the court brief filed by Advocates for Youth and We Testify, two reproductive rights groups who want to make sure that people who have had abortions are heard loudly and clearly by the Supreme Court, whose conservative majority seems wildly out of touch with mainstream American sentiment about the importance of access to legal abortion.

In December, the court will hear a case out of Mississippi that challenges the state's ban on almost all abortions after 15 weeks.

Mississippi, with one remaining abortion clinic, is asking the court not just to uphold its law but also to overturn Roe vs. Wade, the 1973 landmark decision legalizing abortion, and Casey vs. Planned Parenthood, the 1992 Supreme Court decision that upheld Roe but allowed states to impose certain restrictions as long as they do not cause an "undue burden" on women seeking abortions.

The court's conservative majority recently signaled its hostility to abortion rights when it shamefully refused to block enforcement of a plainly unconstitutional Texas law that prohibits abortions after about the sixth week of pregnancy.

Many abortion rights activists believe that Roe is doomed.

Which is why, said We Testify founder Renee Bracey Sherman, it is so important for the justices to hear from women themselves. She said she hopes the justices will take the time to read through the abortion stories and the names of the 6,641 people—most of whom have had abortions—who have signed on to the brief.

"We want those justices to read every single one of our names and to remember that it is 'we the people' who they are supposed to protect," said Bracey Sherman, 35, who first shared her abortion story publicly 10 years ago. "My hope is they read our names and see someone they love, went to school with, care about and remember who they are impacting."

I am not so sure the justices who oppose abortions care much about the women who need and want them.

This lack of concern for women is reflected in a couple of other friend-of-the-court briefs in the Mississippi case.

In one, 240 professional women who describe themselves as "pro-life and feminist" reject the argument advanced in Casey by then-Justice Sandra Day O'Connor that the "ability of women to participate equally in the economic and social life of the Nation has been facilitated by their ability to control their reproductive lives." They argue that there is no good evidence that forcing women to bear children harms them economically.

A second group of 375 women, who say they were injured by late-term abortions, argue that the proliferation of "safe haven" laws, which allow women to abandon newborns in such places as hospitals and fire stations without fear of prosecution, means there is no excuse to abort an unwanted pregnancy. Such laws, they write, "give women total freedom from burdens of unwanted children."

This brief also claims that because embryos can be frozen and later implanted in wombs, the viability standard outlined in Roe and Casey is meaningless. Currently, it is generally accepted that a fetus is viable, or able to survive outside the womb, at about 24 weeks' gestation.

"In vitro fertilization shows viability can be documented at six days after conception," the brief argues. "Inflicting unnecessary pain on an 'infant life' in the womb in an elective abortion is a crime against humanity."

This is such a tortured definition of viability—and such a disturbing dismissal of the role a living, breathing human woman plays in a pregnancy—that I am surprised anyone could write it with a straight face.

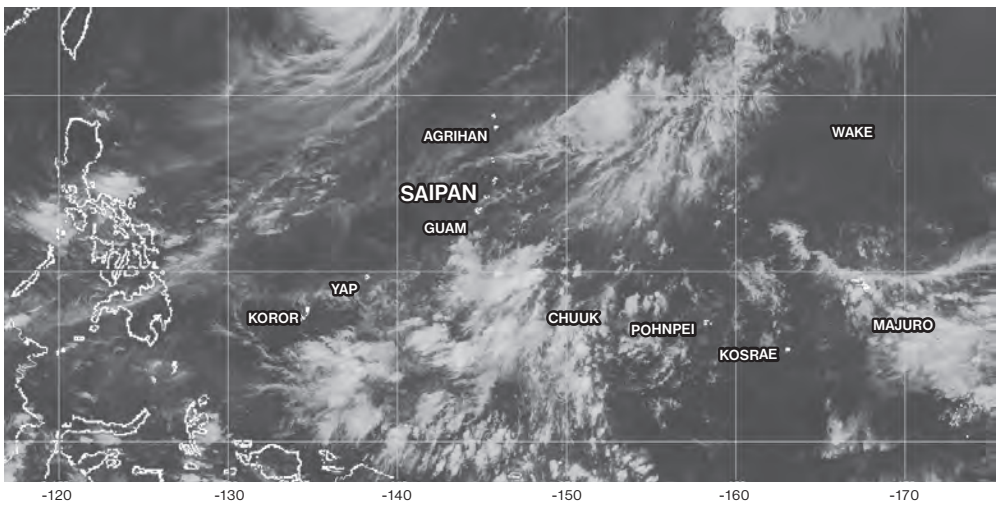
Galvanized by the new Texas law, and the Supreme Court's inexcusable inaction on it, the House on Friday passed the Women's Health Protection Act, aimed at preserving access to abortion regardless of what the court and Republican-dominated state legislatures do. The bill is expected to die in the Senate, where it isn't likely to garner the 10 Republican votes needed to break the filibuster.

When it comes to women's rights, sadly, these are dark times in America.

The Weather

5-DAY FORECAST FOR SAIPAN AND TINIAN

TODAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY	MONDAY
Partly cloudy with isolated showers and a slight chance of thunderstorms. East winds 10 to 15 mph. Highs around 86. Chance of showers 20 percent.	Mostly cloudy with scattered showers and a slight chance of thunderstorms. East winds 10 to 15 mph. Highs around 86. Lows around 77. Chance of showers 30 percent.	Mostly cloudy with scattered showers and a slight chance of thunderstorms. East winds 10 to 15 mph. Highs around 86. Lows around 77. Chance of showers 30 percent.	Mostly cloudy with scattered showers and thunderstorms. Lows in the upper 70s. Highs in the upper 80s. Chance of showers 40 percent.	Mostly cloudy with scattered showers and thunderstorms. Lows in the upper 70s. Highs in the upper 80s. Chance of showers 40 percent.
86º / 77º	86º / 77º	86º / 77º	80º / 70º	80º / 70º



PICTURE TIME: 8:03 AM, THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 30, 2021

Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

Satellite imagery this morning shows partly cloudy skies that consist of some cumulus clouds and a high cirrus deck present across the Marianas. Altimetry data is reporting combined seas of 6 to 8 feet, and is primarily caused by the west-northwest swell.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

MICRONESIA		▲ ▼ °F
Guam and Rota	Partly cloudy	90 / 79 °F
Palau	Mostly cloudy	87 / 79 °F
Yap	Mostly cloudy	89 / 78 °F
Chuuk	Cloudy	84 / 79 °F
Pohnpei	Mostly Cloudy	89 / 77 °F
Kosrae	Mostly cloudy	87 / 79 °F
Majuro	Cloudy	79 °F

DAY	SUNRISE	SUNSET
Today	6:06 AM	6:06 PM
Saturday	6:06 AM	6:05 PM
Sunday	6:06 AM	6:04 PM
Monday	6:07 AM	6:04 PM
Tuesday	6:07 AM	6:03 PM

DAY	MOONRISE	MOONSET	MOONRISE
Today	1:00 AM	2:24 PM	-
Saturday	1:55 AM	3:11 PM	-
Sunday	2:50 AM	3:56 PM	-
Monday	3:46 AM	4:39 PM	-
Tuesday	4:42 AM	5:21 PM	-

AROUND THE GLOBE		▲ ▼ °F
Auckland	Mostly Cloudy/Wind	61 / 51 °F
Beijing	Fair	75 / 59 °F
Hong Kong	Fair	92 / 82 °F
Honolulu	Partly cloudy	80 / 75 °F
London	Partly Cloudy	61 / 59 °F
Los Angeles	Clear	64 / 58 °F
Manila	Partly Cloudy	87 / 79 °F
Melbourne	Rain	65 / 54 °F
Miami	Clear	81 / 78 °F
New York	Cloudy	62 / 57 °F
Osaka	Cloudy	84 / 72 °F
Paris	Clear	64 / 50 °F
Busan	Cloudy	78 / 66 °F
Rome	Fair	86 / 62 °F
Salem	Clear	68 / 64 °F
San Francisco	Clear	60 / 52 °F
Seoul	Partly Cloudy	81 / 63 °F
Tokyo	Mostly cloudy	84 / 67 °F
Washington, DC	Fair	61 / 54 °F

TIDES: SAIPAN HARBOR TODAY		FEET
1:40 AM	High Tide	1.39
9:28 AM	Low Tide	0.18
5:15 PM	High Tide	1.70
10:53 PM	Low Tide	1.16

STOP THE SPREAD

The Governor's COVID-19 Task Force and Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. continue to encourage residents within the Marianas to practice social distancing, which means avoiding close contact with people in order to avoid catching the virus yourself and to avoid passing it on to others.

- Stay home as much as possible. Avoid unnecessary travel or public places.
- Avoid social gatherings in groups of more than 10.
- Choose drive-thru, take-out, or delivery options, or outdoor seating, if available, when dining in.
- Send only one healthy adult from the household run necessary errands, such as getting groceries or picking up medications. Leave children, elderly, and other vulnerable people at home as much as possible. When returning home from an errand, wash your hands before doing anything else.
- Older adults and people with chronic medical conditions are at higher risk of getting very sick from this illness. People at high risk should stay at home as much as possible.
- Create a household plan of action, https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/checklisthousehold-ready.html
- Ensure a 30-day supply of all medicines.

Continue good hand hygiene

- Wash your hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and water, avoid touching your face, cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue or your sleeve.
- Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not readily available.

Know the signs and symptoms of COVID-19 and what to do if you become symptomatic

- Stay home when you are sick and if you recently traveled to a place with COVID-19. Self-quarantine means:
  - Choosing a room in your house that can be used to separate sick household members from others.
  - Washing your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
  - Avoiding touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
  - Limiting visitors

CHCC appreciates the patience and understanding of the community at this time. To obtain general information about the CNMI COVID-19 response, contact the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force Hotline at 287-0046, 287-0489, 287-1089. These numbers are available Monday to Sunday, 7:30am - 4:30pm.

For medical information about COVID-19, reach out to the COVID-19 Infoline at the following numbers: 285-1672/1352. These numbers are available Monday to Friday, 7:30am - 4:30pm.

For mental health support and helpful tips during a crisis, call the Mental Health Support Line at 285-1856, 323-6560, 323-6561 These numbers are available Monday to Friday, 7:30am - 4:30 pm. For the 24/7 Disaster Distress Helpline, call SAMSHA at 1-800-985-5990.

For more information about DIY face coverings, visit https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/cloth-face-cover.html

For more information about CHCC programs, follow CHCC on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter at @cnmichcc, check out our website at www.chcc.gov.mp or call us at (670) 234-8950.

For more information on the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force, visit www.governor.gov.mpand, follow @GovernorCNMI on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter.

This health advisory may be found online at http://www.chcc.gov.mp/pressrelease.html and at www.governor.gov.mp/covid-19.

Rumor control

During crises like this, oftentimes the spread of misinformation is just as dangerous as the virus itself. The CNMI is reminded to only share official and verified notices, press releases, and advisories from the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force and CHCC.

Source: Office of the Governor

NEWS DESK For news tips, corrections and requests for news coverage, call (670) 235-NEWS (6397), 235-2440, fax 235,3740. E-mail: editor@saipantribune.com. Website:www.saipantribune.com.

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FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF SEPTEMBER 30, 2021

DEPARTURES

SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)

UA117	6:45am	7:25am	1, 3, 6
UA117	9:45am	10:25am	2, 4, 5, 7

GUAM-MANILA (MNL)

UA183	7:05pm	8:50pm	2, 5
UA183	7:25pm	9:10pm	1, 3, 4, 6, 7

SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)

UA117/183	6:45am	9:10pm	1, 3, 6 via Guam
UA117/183	9:45am	8:50pm	2, 5 via Guam
UA117/183	9:45am	9:10pm	4, 7 via Guam

SAIPAN-INCHEON (ICN)

7C3406	3:10PM	6:55PM	6
OZ6243	4:00PM	7:40PM	6

ARRIVALS

GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN

UA174	5:00am	5:41am	1, 3, 6
UA174	8:00am	8:41am	2, 4, 5, 7

MANILA (MNL)-GUAM

UA184	9:50pm	3:55am+1	2, 5
UA184	10:25pm	4:30am+1	1, 3, 4, 6, 7

MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN

UA184/174	9:50pm	5:41am+1	2, 5 via Guam
UA184/174	10:25pm	5:41am+1	7 via Guam
UA184/174	10:25pm	8:41am+1	1, 3, 4, 6 via Guam

INCHEON (ICN)-SAIPAN

7C3405	8:30AM	2:10PM	6
OZ6233	9:00AM	2:30PM	6

LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); UA United Airlines • ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. *(The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)*

STAR MARIANAS AIR, INC.

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF MAY 18, 2021

SAIPAN TO ROTA

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
1301	8:30AM	9:00AM	Daily
1302	11:00AM	11:30AM	Daily
1303	1:30PM	2:00PM	Tues/Wed/Thurs/Fri
1304	3:30PM	4:00PM	Daily

ROTA TO SAIPAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
3101	9:30AM	10:00AM	Daily
3102	12:00AM	12:30AM	Daily
3103	1:30PM	3:00PM	Tues/Wed/Thurs/Fri
3104	4:30PM	5:00PM	Daily

ROTA TO GUAM

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
3401	12:15	12:45	Temporarily Unavailable

GUAM TO ROTA

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
4301	13:00	13:30	Temporarily Unavailable

SAIPAN TO TINIAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
1201	7:00	7:15	Temporarily Unavailable
1202	8:00	8:15	Daily
1203	9:00	9:15	Daily
1204	10:00	10:15	Daily
1205	11:00	11:15	Daily
1206	12:00	12:15	Temporarily Unavailable
1207	13:00	13:15	Temporarily Unavailable
1208	14:00	14:15	Daily
1209	15:00	15:15	Daily
1210	16:00	16:15	Daily
1211	17:00	17:15	Daily
1212	17:00	17:15	Temporarily Unavailable

TINIAN TO SAIPAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
2101	7:30	7:45	Temporarily Unavailable
2102	8:30	8:45	Daily
2103	9:30	9:45	Daily
2104	10:30	10:45	Daily
2105	11:30	11:45	Daily
2106	12:30	12:45	Temporarily Unavailable
2107	13:30	13:45	Temporarily Unavailable
2108	14:30	14:45	Daily
2109	15:30	15:45	Daily
2110	16:30	16:45	Daily
2111	17:30	17:45	Daily
2112	18:30	18:45	Temporarily Unavailable

Business

Bank of Guam wins 2 top honors in nat'l brand competition

» Stop COVID, Spread LOVE best in crisis communications and social media campaign

HÅGATNA, Guam—Bank of Guam announced Wednesday that their campaign *Stop COVID, Spread LOVE* has been awarded two 2021 Brand Slam Awards for best crisis communications and social media campaign from the American Bankers Association.

The 2021 ABA Brand Slam Awards honor the nation's top marketing strategies from banks of all sizes with a volunteer panel of over 70 certified financial marketing professional-credentialed experts weighing in on campaigns from July 1, 2020 through June 30, 2021.

Stop COVID, Spread LOVE was awarded the 2021 ABA Brand Slam Award for best crisis communications and social media campaign based on weighted criteria for concept, strategy, creativity, execution, and impact. With profound insight, the award-winning campaign shares heartfelt perspectives from parents, caregivers, front-liners, executive decision-makers, and even COVID-19 survivors, all of whom are Bank of Guam employees. The campaign, delivered in a four-part series, aimed to capture a stay-at-home audience using an integrated strategy that combined traditional and social media channels along with out-of-home advertising, delivering compelling stories of resilience, courage, and compassion.

Lesley-Anne Leon Guerrero, chief experience officer at Bank of Guam, said the ad campaign was created during the early months of the COVID-19 pandemic "and was our way to shed light on how this virus was touching every corner of our community. Shot on cell phones and over zoom, from our offices, homes, and even while in isolation, we shared the real stories of our employees and how this virus impacted our lives and changed the way we did business.

"To earn national recognition with two Brand Slam Awards is a huge win for our entire community and a tribute to the all the heroes who continue the fight to get this virus under control and to keep our community safe," she added.

Joaquin P. LG. Cook, who is president and chief executive officer of Bank of Guam, said the ad campaign was created from the desire to support local, national and global efforts to contain the spread of COVID-19.

"As an essential industry during such a pivotal time, these stories capture the different perspectives of each of our employees and highlight the importance of being in this together while still inspiring action from behind the mask," said Cook. "To be honored for this piece twice hits differently to our Bank of Guam *familia* [family] who used their voice to raise awareness and should be especially meaningful to all within our community who live these stories every day and continue the fight against this virus."

For a complete list of this year's American Bankers Association 2021 Brand Slam Awards, please visit www.aba.com. ***(PR)***

Kiribati celebrates World Tourism Day

The Tourism Authority of Kiribati celebrated World Tourism Day last Sept. 27 with the theme "Tourism Through Inclusive Growth" by unveiling its Tourism Restart Program in Betio, South Tarawa.

The event was attended by government ministers, secretaries, members of the diplomatic corps, tourism operators, non-government organisations, and civil society representatives from Tarawa and Kiritimati.

TAK chief executive officer Petero Manufolau shared the organisation's tourism restart program framework, which aims to determine, clarify, and communicate what conditions and protocols will be needed to be adhered to for international travel to Kiribati. The program also intends to prepare Kiribati tourism operators for the resumption of international travel through health, business, and marketing support.

In his presentation, Manufolau highlighted the four main components of the tourism resumption framework, which includes COVID-19 safety protocols, the 2021–2023 digital marketing strategy, the revised Mauri Mark Tourism Accreditation Program, and the 2021–2036 Kiribati Sustainable Tourism Development Policy Framework.

Minister of Information, Communication, Transport & Tourism Development Tekeeua Tarati acknowledged TAK's work over the past 18 months, in particular the efforts to develop and grow the domestic tourism market in Kiribati, and the development of the COVID-19 tourism safe protocols. ***(PR)***

Government officials of Tourism Authority of Kiribati celebrated World Tourism Day last Sept. 27, members of the diplomatic corps, tourism operators, non-government organisations, and civil society representatives from Tarawa and Kiritimati pose for a picture during Tourism Authority of Kiribati's celebration of World Tourism Day last Sept. 27. CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Why coffee could cost more at groceries, cafes

SILVER SPRING, Md. (AP)—As if a cup of coffee wasn't expensive enough, a confluence of factors is driving up farmers' costs to grow the beans and it could begin filtering down to your local cafe before the end of the year.

After hovering for years near $1 per pound, coffee futures—the price large-volume buyers agree to pay for coffee upon delivery months down the road—doubled in late July, reaching heights not seen since 2014. Though prices have eased a bit, they remain elevated at about $1.90 per pound.

Coffee lovers already paying $8 or more for a bag in the supermarket or up to $5 for a cup may despair over even-higher prices, but a spike in coffee prices on the international futures market doesn't always trickle down to the consumer.

Here's a look at some factors that could determine whether Americans will be paying more for their morning jolt in the near future.

WHAT HAPPENED?

A sustained drought followed by two July frosts blew a hole in Brazil's coffee output, immediately sending wholesale prices for the popular Arabica bean to more than $2 per pound. The frost will significantly affect the 2022-23 harvest, said Carlos Mera, who analyzes the coffee markets at Rabobank.

The Brazil frosts followed COVID-related supply chain snarls, a dearth of shipping containers, labor shortages and other production hiccups. Add in rising costs for virtually everything and you have a bitter cup brewing for coffee drinkers.

"This is unprecedented," said Alexis Rubinstein, the managing editor of Coffee & Cocoa for commodities brokerage StoneX Group. "It's never been this perfect storm before. It's usually just been a supply-and-demand scenario.

"We've never been dealing with a supply and demand issue on top of a logistics issue, on top of labor issues, on top of a global pandemic."

WHY MIGHT RETAIL PRICES RISE?

While it's difficult to determine the size of the crop loss in Brazil, Mera said estimates vary between 2 million and 6 million fewer bags of coffee. That's about 12% of the output from the world's largest producer of Arabica, the bean used for most coffee sold around the world. Lower supplies almost always mean higher prices.

Grace Wood, an industry analyst for market research firm IBISWorld, said if consumers don't see coffee prices rise by the end of this year, they almost certainly will in 2022, as per capita demand is expected to increase.

"That is just going to contribute to more demand that is going to further disrupt operations and make it more difficult for operators who are already experiencing supply issues," Wood said.

Mera said people who buy coffee beans in the grocery store will likely see a more noticeable increase in prices because about half the cost of that bag on the shelf comes solely from the bean itself. However, in large coffee shops, he added, the cost of the bean only represents about 5% of your cup of hot coffee, so roasters "may not need to carry over the increases right away."

IS IT A CERTAINTY THAT RETAIL PRICES WILL RISE?

It seems likely, although higher coffee prices on the international future market is not a guarantee that prices at your favorite roaster will go up. The damaged crop in Brazil is still more than a year from harvest, plenty of time for many factors to reverse course.

Rubinstein said higher prices on the international market can often stimulate production—farmers will have more money to invest in their crop—and if there's more coffee on the market, prices will retreat. But that will also depend on whether the big roasters have enough beans hoarded to get them through however long prices remain elevated.

Starbucks, the world's biggest coffee retailer, suggested that it won't need to raise its prices because of Brazil's lower output. On a call with investors at the height of the Arabica price spike, the Seattle-based coffee chain's President and CEO Kevin Johnson said his company has 14 months of supply, which he says will get it through 2021 and most of fiscal 2022.

WHAT ABOUT MY LOCAL ROASTER?

Even smaller, independent specialty roasters sign contracts to buy their beans well in advance, enough so that when shortages like the ones in Brazil happen, it doesn't paralyze them. They also source from countries all around the world, so gaps from one place can often be filled by another.

Chris Vigilante, co-owner of Vigilante Coffee with stores in the Maryland suburbs of Washington, D.C., said most specialty roasters don't buy beans on the same international commodities market with the big players like Nestle and Keurig Dr. Pepper. "So we're not as impacted by (Brazil), but we will feel the pressure of it," Vigilante said.

Vigilante said he pays between $3.50 and $5.50 per pound for most of his beans, which are higher quality and produced by smaller farms. He has no plans to raise prices, but if other small shops raise theirs, he said it's likely because the cost for other essentials have risen.

"I've seen other specialty coffee roasters talking about raising their prices, but I think that's more not because of the cost of coffee, but maybe because the cost of some of our other supplies, like cups and equipment," Vigilante said.

Nation

USGS VIA AP

This webcam image provided by the United States Geological Survey shows a view of an eruption that has begun in the Halemaumau crater at the summit of Hawaii's Kilauea volcano, Wednesday, Sept. 29, 2021.

Hawaii's Kilauea volcano erupts, lava fountains form in park

HONOLULU (AP)—One of the most active volcanos on Earth is erupting on Hawaii's Big Island.

Officials with the U.S. Geological Survey confirmed Wednesday that an eruption has begun in Kilauea volcano's Halemaumau crater at the volcano's summit.

Webcam footage of the crater showed lava fountains covering the floor of the crater and billowing clouds of volcanic gas were rising into the air. The same area has been home to a large lava lake at various times throughout the volcano's eruptive past.

The eruption is not in an area with homes and is entirely contained within Hawaii Volcanoes National Park.

"All signs indicate that it will stay within the crater," said Ken Hon, the USGS scientist in charge of Hawaii Volcano Observatory. "We're not seeing any indications that lava is moving into the lower part of the east rift zone where people live. Currently all the activity is within the park."

The volcano's alert level has been raised to "warning" and the aviation code changed to red.

Earlier Wednesday, officials said increased earthquake activity and ground swelling had been detected, and at that time raised the alert levels accordingly.

Kilauea had a major eruption in 2018 that destroyed more than 700 homes and displaced thousands of residents. Before that eruption, the volcano had been slowly erupting for decades, but mostly not in densely populated residential areas.

Before the major 2018 eruption, Kilauea had been erupting since 1983 and streams of lava occasionally covered rural farms and homes. During that time, the lava sometimes reached the ocean, causing dramatic interactions with the water.

Over four months in 2018, Kilauea spewed enough lava to fill 320,000 Olympic-sized swimming pools, burying an area more than half the size of Manhattan in up to 80 feet (24 meters) of now-hardened lava. The molten rock reduced landmarks, streets and neighborhoods to a vast field of blackened boulders and volcanic shard.

After the 2018 eruption the summit lava lake stopped erupting and for the first time in recorded history began to fill with water, raising concerns about the possibility of an explosive interaction between lava and groundwater.

The same area of the volcano that began erupting Wednesday also erupted in December and lasted until May.

Hon said these types of eruptions could be happening for years as the volcano fills up.

"We do know that one thing that happens is that the magma keeps coming in to Kilauea at a pretty constant rate and so it's either filling the inside of the volcano and repressurize it or it's coming out to the surface."

Hawaii Volcanoes National Park spokesperson Jessica Ferracane told The Associated Press that she had not yet arrived at the park, but that colleagues reported seeing some lava spatter and glow within the summit crater.

"He saw that from Volcano House, which is at least 2 miles away from the eruption site, so I suspect ... we'll be able to see a pretty glow, and who knows what else," she said.

Biden can't budge fellow Dems with big overhaul at stake

WASHINGTON (AP)—His government overhaul plans at stake, President Joe Biden appeared unable Wednesday night to swiftly strike agreement with two wavering Democratic senators trying to trim back his potentially historic $3.5 trillion measure that will collapse without their support.

With Republicans solidly opposed and no Democratic votes to spare, Biden canceled a trip to Chicago that was to focus on COVID-19 vaccinations so he could dig in for a full day of intense negotiations ahead of crucial votes. Aides made their way to Capitol Hill for talks, and late in the day supportive House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer met with Biden at the White House.

The risks were clear, but so was the potential reward as Biden and his party reach for a giant legislative accomplishment—promising a vast rewrite of the nation's balance sheet with an ever-slim majority in Congress. His idea is to essentially raise taxes on corporations and the wealthy and use that money to expand government health care, education and other programs—an impact that would be felt in countless American lives.

"We take it one step at a time," Pelosi, told reporters.

Attention is focused on Sens. Joe Manchin of West Virginia and Kyrsten Sinema of Arizona, centrist Democrats. They share a concern that the overall size of Biden's plan is too big, but have infuriated colleagues by not making any counter-proposals public.

In a possibly ominous sign, Manchin sent out a fiery statement late Wednesday, decrying the broad spending as "fiscal insanity" and warning it would not get his vote without adjustments. "I cannot—and will not—support trillions in spending or an all-or-nothing approach," he said.

Together, the two senators hold the keys to unlocking the stalemate over Biden's sweeping vision, the heart of his campaign pledges. While neither has said no to a deal, they have yet to signal yes—but they part ways on specifics, according to a person familiar with the private talks and granted anonymity to discuss them.

Manchin appears to have fewer questions about the revenue side of the equation—the higher taxes on corporations and the wealthy—than the spending plans and particular policies, especially those related to climate change that are important to his coal-centric state. He wants any expansion of aid programs to Americans to be based on income needs, not simply for everyone.

Though Sinema is less publicly open in her views, she focuses her questions on the menu of tax options, including the increased corporate rate that some in the business community argue could make the U.S. less competitive overseas and the individual rate that others warn could snare small business owners.

Health workers once saluted as heroes now get threats

OMAHA, Neb. (AP)—More than a year after U.S. health care workers on the front lines against COVID-19 were saluted as heroes with nightly clapping from windows and balconies, some are being issued panic buttons in case of assault and ditching their scrubs before going out in public for fear of harassment.

Across the country, doctors and nurses are dealing with hostility, threats and violence from patients angry over safety rules designed to keep the scourge from spreading.

"A year ago, we're health care heroes and everybody's clapping for us," said Dr. Stu Coffman, a Dallas-based emergency room physician. "And now we're being in some areas harassed and disbelieved and ridiculed for what we're trying to do, which is just depressing and frustrating."

Cox Medical Center Branson in Missouri started giving panic buttons to up to 400 nurses and other employees after assaults per year tripled between 2019 and 2020 to 123, a spokeswoman said. One nurse had to get her shoulder X-rayed after an attack.

Hospital spokeswoman Brandei Clifton said the pandemic has driven at least some of the increase.

"So many nurses say, 'It's just part of the job,'" Clifton said. "It's not part of the job."

Some hospitals have limited the number of public entrances. In Idaho, nurses said they are scared to go to the grocery store unless they have changed out of their scrubs so they aren't accosted by angry residents.

Doctors and nurses at a Coeur d'Alene, Idaho, hospital have been accused of killing patients by grieving family members who don't believe COVID-19 is real, said hospital spokeswoman Caiti Bobbitt. Others have been the subject of hurtful rumors spread by people angry about the pandemic.

"Our health care workers are almost feeling like Vietnam veterans, scared to go into the community after a shift," Bobbitt said.

Over Labor Day weekend in Colorado, a passerby threw an unidentified liquid at a nurse working at a mobile vaccine clinic in suburban Denver. Another person in a pickup truck ran over and destroyed signs put up around the clinic's tent.

Asia

Ex-diplomat Kishida wins Japan party vote, to become new PM

TOKYO (AP)—Former Japanese Foreign Minister Fumio Kishida won the governing party's leadership election on Wednesday and is set to become the next prime minister, facing the tasks of reviving a pandemic-hit economy and ensuring a strong alliance with Washington to counter growing regional security risks.

Kishida replaces outgoing party leader Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga, who is stepping down after serving only one year.

As new leader of the Liberal Democratic Party, Kishida is certain to be elected the next prime minister on Monday in parliament, where his party and its coalition partner control both houses.

In his victory speech, Kishida vowed to tackle "national crises" including COVID-19, the pandemic-battered economy and the declining population and birthrate. He said he would pursue "important issues related to Japan's future" through a vision of "a free and open Indo-Pacific" that counters China's assertiveness in the region.

Kishida defeated popular vaccinations minister Taro Kono in a runoff after finishing only one vote ahead of him in the first round, in which none of the four candidates, including two women, was able to win a majority.

In a landslide 257-170 victory in the second round, Kishida received support from party heavyweights who apparently chose stability over change advocated by Kono, who is known as something of a maverick and a reformist.

Kishida

Kishida is under pressure to change the party's high-handed reputation, worsened by Suga, who angered the public over his handling of the pandemic and insistence on holding the Summer Olympics in Tokyo despite surging infections.

The long-ruling conservative Liberal Democratic Party desperately needs to quickly turn around plunging public support ahead of lower house elections coming within two months.

Kishida said he heard many voters in the past year complaining that they were being ignored. "I felt our democracy is in a crisis," he said in his speech. "I, Fumio Kishida, have a special skill of listening to people. I am determined to make an effort toward making a more open LDP and a bright future for Japan together with you all."

The 64-year-old former foreign minister was once seen as an indecisive moderate. Lately, however, he has shifted to become a security and diplomatic hawk as he sought support from influential conservatives to win the party election.

Kishida has called for a further increase in Japan's defense capability and budget, and vowed to stand up to China in tensions over self-ruled Taiwan that China claims as part of its territory, and Beijing's crackdown on dissent in Hong Kong.

On the economy, Kishida has called for a "new capitalism" of growth and distribution to narrow the income gap between the rich and the poor that widened under former Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, Japan's longest-serving leader, and worsened during the pandemic.

He also pledged to promote clean energy technology to turn climate change measures into growth opportunities and proposed a generous economic recovery package.

"I will start a positive cycle of growth and distribution" to raise people's income, not just to benefit big companies," Kishida said at his first news conference as LDP president. He pledged to defend democracy, peace and stability and raise the country's international profile.

NKorea's Kim wants to restore hotlines with South Korea soon

SEOUL, South Korea (AP)—North Korea leader Kim Jong Un expressed his willingness to restore stalled communication lines with South Korea to promote peace in early October, while he shrugged off recent U.S. offers for dialogue by calling them "more cunning ways" to conceal its hostility against the North, state media reported Thursday.

Kim's statement is an apparent effort to drive a wedge between Seoul and Washington as he wants South Korea to help him win relief from crippling U.S.-led economic sanctions and other concessions. In recent days, Pyongyang offered conditional talks with Seoul though it performed a series of missile tests in its first weapons firings in six months and stepped up its criticism of the United States.

The U.N. Security Council scheduled an emergency closed meeting on Thursday at the request of the United States, United Kingdom and France on North Korea's recent tests, including its first reported hypersonic missile test on Tuesday.

During a speech at his country's rubber-stamp parliament on Wednesday, Kim said the restoration of cross-border hotlines—which have been largely dormant for more than a year—would realize the Korean people's wishes for a peace between the two Koreas, according to the official Korean Central News Agency.

Kim still accused South Korea of being "bent on begging external support and cooperation while clamoring for international cooperation in servitude to the U.S.," rather than committing to resolving the matters independently between the Koreas.

Kim repeated his powerful sister Kim Yo Jong's calls for Seoul to abandon "double-dealing attitude" and "hostile viewpoint" over the North's missile tests and other developments, saying the fate of inter-Korean ties is at a critical juncture. Some experts say North Korea is pressuring South Korea to tone down its criticism of its ballistic missile tests, which are banned by U.N. Security Council resolutions, in a bid to receive an international recognition as a nuclear power.

On the United States, he dismissed repeated U.S. offers to resume talks without preconditions, calling them an attempt to hide America's "hostile policy" and "military threats" that he said remain unchanged.

The Biden administration "is touting 'diplomatic engagement' and 'dialogue without preconditions' but it is no more than a petty trick for deceiving the international community and hiding its hostile acts and an extension of the hostile policy pursued by the successive U.S. administrations," Kim said.

He added: "The U.S. remains utterly unchanged in posing military threats and pursuing hostile policy toward (North Korea) but employs more cunning ways and methods in doing so."

North Korea has long called U.S.-led economic sanctions on it and regular military drills between Washington and Seoul as proof of U.S. "hostile policies" on them. Kim Jong Un has said he would bolster his nuclear arsenal and not resume nuclear diplomacy with Washington unless such U.S. hostility is withdrawn.

U.S. officials have repeatedly expressed hopes to sit down for talks with North Korea "anywhere and at any time," but have maintained they will continue sanctions until the North takes concrete steps toward denuclearization.

Rohingya refugee leader shot dead in Bangladesh camp

DHAKA, Bangladesh (AP)—An international representative of ethnic Rohingya refugees was shot to death in a camp in Bangladesh by unknown gunmen late Wednesday, police said.

Mohibullah, 50, was a teacher who emerged as a key refugee leader and a spokesman representing the Muslim ethnic group in international meetings. He visited the White House in 2019 for a meeting on religious freedom with then-President Donald Trump and spoke about the suffering and persecution faced by Rohingya in Myanmar.

That same year, he was bitterly criticized by Bangladeshi media after he led a massive rally of 200,000 refugees to mark the second anniversary of the crackdown by Myanmar's military that caused about 700,000 Rohingya, including Mohibullah, to flee to neighboring Bangladesh.

The unidentified attackers shot Mohibullah at the Kutupalong refugee camp at Ukhiya in Cox's Bazar district, said Naimul Haque, an commander of the Armed Police Battalion in Cox's Bazar. He was rushed to a hospital where he was declared dead.

No groups claimed responsibility and it was not clear immediately who was behind the attack.

Human Rights Watch called Mohibullah a vital voice for the Rohingya community. "He always defended the rights of the Rohingya to safe and dignified returns and to have a say in the decisions concerning their lives and future. His killing is a stark demonstration of the risks faced by those in the camps who speak up for freedom and against violence," Meenakshi Ganguly, the rights group's South Asia director, said in a statement.

"Mohibullah's death undermines not only the struggle of Rohingya refugees for greater rights and protection in the refugee camps, but also their efforts to safely return to their homes in Myanmar. Bangladesh authorities should urgently investigate Mohibullah's killing along with other attacks on Rohingya activists in the camps," she said.

Overall, Bangladesh has been sheltering more than 1.1 million Rohingya refugees from Myanmar after previous waves of persecution.

People cross Bourke Street in Melbourne, Thursday, Sept. 30, 2021. AP

Australian state's 50% jump in COVID-19 blamed on sport fans

CANBERRA, Australia (AP)—Australia's Victoria state on Thursday reported a jump of more than 50% in daily COVID-19 cases, which authorities largely blame on Australian Rules Football parties last weekend that breached pandemic regulations.

State capital Melbourne traditionally hosts the annual grand final which the football-obsessed city celebrates with a long weekend.

Because of Melbourne's lockdown, two Melbourne teams played for the national premiership on Saturday in the coronavirus-free west coast city of Perth.

Contact tracers found a third of Victoria's 1,438 new infections reported on Thursday had broken pandemic rules by attending social gatherings on the Friday public holiday and on game day, officials said.

Jeroen Weimar, commander of Victoria's COVID-19 response, said time would tell whether the infection jump was "one big rogue day" or part of a grave new trend.

"Today highlights the consequence of hundreds of people dropping their guards, dropping their guard for very understandable reasons and we're all fed up with it," Weimar said, referring to Melbourne's lockdown.

"But this is a direct consequence of hundreds of decisions made on Friday and Saturday last week and the question now is how we manage this going forward," he added.

Melbourne's lockdown is set to end on Oct. 26 when 70% of the state's population aged 16 and older is expected to be fully vaccinated. Residents are becoming increasingly frustrated by the city's sixth lockdown of the pandemic.

World

Ecuador declares prison emergency after 116 killed in riot

AP
A woman comforts a man outside the morgue while waiting for the bodies of inmates killed in a riot at the Litoral penitentiary in Guayaquil, Ecuador, Wednesday, September 29, 2021.

QUITO, Ecuador (AP)—Ecuador's president has declared a state of emergency in the prison system following a battle among gang members in a coastal lockup that killed at least 116 people and injured 80 in what authorities say was the worst prison bloodbath ever in the country.

Officials said at least five of the dead were found to have been beheaded.

President Guillermo Lasso decreed a state of emergency Wednesday, which will give the government powers that include deploying police and soldiers inside prisons. The order came a day after bloodshed at the Litoral penitentiary in Guayaquil that officials blamed on gangs linked to international drug cartels fighting for control of the facility.

Lasso, visibly moved by the carnage, said at a news conference that what had happened in the prison was "bad and sad." He also said he could not guarantee that authorities had regained control of the lockup.

"It is regrettable that the prisons are being turned into territories for power disputes by criminal gangs," he said, adding that he would act with "absolute firmness" to regain control of the Litoral prison and prevent the violence from spreading to other penitentiaries.

Images circulating on social media showed dozens of bodies in the prison's Pavilions 9 and 10 and scenes that looked like battlefields. The fighting was with firearms, knives and bombs, officials said. Earlier, regional police commander Fausto Buenaño had said that bodies were being found in the prison's pipelines.

Outside the prison morgue, the relatives of inmates wept, with some describing to reporters the cruelty with which their loved ones were killed, decapitated and dismembered.

"In the history of the country, there has not been an incident similar or close to this one," said Ledy Zúñiga, the former president of Ecuador's National Rehabilitation Council.

Zúñiga, who was also the former director of Ecuador's military intelligence, said the bloody fighting shows that "transnational organized crime has permeated the structure" of Ecuador's prisons, adding that Mexico's Sinaloa and Jalisco New Generation cartels operate through local gangs.

"They want to sow fear," he told The Associated Press on Wednesday, urging the government to temporarily cede control of the prisons to the National Police. "The more radical and violent the way they murder," the more they achieve their goal of control, he added.

Ecuador's president said that care points had been set up for relatives of the inmates with food and psychological support. He added that a $24 million program to address the country's prisons will be accelerated, starting with investments in infrastructure and technology in the Litoral prison.

Earlier, officials said the violence erupted from a dispute between the "Los Lobos" and "Los Choneros" prison gangs.

Col. Mario Pazmiño, the country's minister of justice in 2016, said she regretted that steps had not been taken to prevent another massacre following deadly prison riots last February.

Mexico returns Haitian migrants on flight to Haiti

MEXICO CITY (AP)—Mexico began flying Haitian migrants back to their homeland Wednesday, sending 70 people to Port au Prince.

The first flight took off from the Villahermosa airport in the Gulf coast state of Tabasco with 41 men, 16 women and 13 minors aboard. The United States is also returning migrants on flights to the Haitian capital.

Mexico's National Immigration Institute did not immediately respond to questions about when more flights were planned. But it referred to those on Wednesday's flight as "the first group," suggesting it was the start of a process to handle thousands of Haitian migrants who streamed to the U.S. border this month.

Thousands more are stuck in the southern city of Tapachula, near the Guatemalan border, waiting to have their asylum or refugee claims processed by Mexican officials.

"Authorities from the Interior and Foreign Relations Departments agreed with representatives of the Republic of Haiti to start the assisted voluntary return of migrants in Mexico to their homeland," the institute said in a statement.

The institute said the returns were voluntary, and that the Haitians had been living in Tabasco and central Mexico. That suggests they were not among those who had gone to the U.S. border this month, nor the thousands stuck in Tapachula.

A Mexican official said last week that the plan was to first remove Haitians who were already in detention centers and had not requested protective status.

On Friday, Mexico President Andrés Manuel López Obrador said, "We don't want Mexico to be a migrant camp; we want the problem to be addressed fully."

On Tuesday, Mexican officials opened a mammoth reception center outside a soccer stadium in Tapachula in a bid to ease a backlog in Mexico's asylum system and the resulting frustrations that drove thousands of applicants to head toward the U.S.

Lava from La Palma eruption finally reaches the Atlantic

LOS LLANOS DE ARIDANE, Canary Islands (AP)—A bright red river of lava from the volcano on Spain's La Palma island finally tumbled over a cliff and into the Atlantic Ocean, setting off huge plumes of steam and possibly toxic gases that forced local residents outside the evacuation zone to remain indoors on Wednesday.

The immediate area had been evacuated for several days as authorities waited for the lava that began erupting Sept. 19 to traverse the 6½ kilometers (four miles) to the island's edge. On the way down from the Cumbre Vieja volcanic ridge, the lava flows have engulfed at least 656 buildings, mostly homes and farm buildings, in its unstoppable march to the sea.

The meeting of molten rock and sea water finally came at 11 p.m. on Tuesday. By daybreak, a widening promontory of newborn land could be seen forming under plumes of steam rising high into the area.

Even though initial air quality reading showed no danger in the area, experts had warned that the arrival of the lava at the ocean would likely produce small explosions and release toxic gases that could damage lungs. Authorities established a security perimeter of 3½ kilometers (about two miles) and asked residents in the wider area to remain indoors with windows shut to avoid breathing in any gases.

No deaths or serious injuries have been reported from the island's first eruption in 50 years, thanks to the prompt evacuations of over 6,000 people after the ground cracked open following weeks of tremors.

The flattening of the terrain as it approached the coast had slowed down the flow of the lava, causing it to widen out and do more damage to villages and farms. The local economy is largely based on agriculture, above all the cultivation of the Canary plantain.

Just before it poured down a cliff into the sea at a local point known as Los Guirres, the lava rolled over the coastal highway, cutting off the last road in the area that connects the island to several villages.

"We hope that the channel to the sea that has opened stops the lava flow, which widened to reach 600 meters (2,000 feet) at one point, from continuing to grow, because that has caused tremendous damage," Ángel Víctor Torres, president of the Canary Islands regional government, told Cope radio.

WORLD BRIEFS

Indigenous protest in Paraguay's capital erupts in violence

ASUNCION, Paraguay (AP)—Indigenous groups demonstrated in Paraguay's capital Wednesday against a law that makes it a crime to invade private property, and the protest escalated into violence that authorities said saw seven police officers injured, four cars set on fire and other acts of vandalism. The police command said one officer was hit by an arrow shot by archers from an ethnic group not yet identified. Television coverage showed the commander of a police station about 300 meters (yards) from the Congress building lying on the ground and being hit by demonstrators with stones and sticks. Prosecutors said those protesters could not be identified as Indigenous. The unrest began when the 80-member Chamber of Deputies approved an amendment to the land invasion law that would increase the penalty to six years in prison from four for those who illegally occupy private property. Indigenous groups often invade properties to press their demands that land be given to poor farmers.

Israeli police kill alleged Palestinian stabber in Jerusalem

JERUSALEM (AP)—Israeli police said Thursday that officers shot a Palestinian woman who allegedly attempted to stab them in east Jerusalem's Old City. She was pronounced dead at the scene. The police said in a statement that the woman approached officers outside an entrance to the city's flashpoint holy site known to Muslims as the Al-Aqsa Compound and to Jews as the Temple Mount. "After she approached them, she drew a knife and attempted to stab the officers at the scene, who responded by shooting at her," police said in a statement. "Medical personnel who arrived at the scene pronounced her dead." The woman's identity was not immediately known. Palestinian media reported that she was from a town near the West Bank city of Jenin, where tensions have run high following the escape by Palestinian prisoners from an Israeli prison.

Off The Wall

Some Argentines turn to unusual pandemic pets for comfort

(AP PHOTO/NATACHA PISARENKO)
Luciana Benetti, 16, feeds her pet pig Chanchi, given to her as a birthday gift the previous year amid the COVID-19 pandemic in Buenos Aires, Argentina, Saturday, Sept. 4, 2021. "One day my legs gave way and he came running. He grabbed my hair and raised my head," she said. She had been taking online classes at home, unable to see friends or schoolmates. "I didn't feel well. I was dizzy because I couldn't leave."

Millions of people have found solace during the pandemic in cuddling a dog or cat. For a few, comfort comes in other forms—those of a horse or a pig, perhaps a possum-like sugar glider or even a tarantula.

As the new coronavirus began to circulate last year, Luciana Benetti found her plans for a big traditional 15th birthday party scrapped.

In its place, her parents gave her a pig.

Chanchi turned out to be a loyal and loving companion—racing to her side when she fainted.

"One day my legs gave way and he came running. He grabbed my hair and raised my head," she said. She had been taking online classes at home, unable to see friends or schoolmates. "I didn't feel well. I was dizzy because I couldn't leave."

Without Chanchi, "I wouldn't be me," said Benetti, who often sleeps alongside the 20-kilo (45-pound) Juliana pig that greets her with a squeal of delight when she arrives at her house. Even less common is the case of Lorena Álvarez, whose Buenos Aires apartment is also home to 28 pocket-sized marsupials commonly known as sugar gliders.

"They create pure love for me," she said. "Do you know what it is to lay down ... and they smother you with kisses?"

Álvarez, who teaches statistics at a university—online these days—lives otherwise alone, but said the pets have helped her feel like she has company—sometimes popping up atop her head during Zoom calls.

"I get up and I live for them. They are my engine of struggle and of life," she said of the animals that scamper over her looking to be petted, or leap and glide down to the floor.

The 28 are the result of two she adopted several years ago after getting a permit for the exotic animals.

That sort of multiplication is one of several reasons that many animal rights groups oppose keeping gliders as pets, and why some dealers sell only neutered males.

Skeptics say the animals are often abandoned by overwhelmed owners less dedicated than Álvarez—who herself offers advice to would-be owners—or suffer in the hands of people unprepared for the behaviors, special diets and needs of a tree-dwelling night creature that can glide for 50 yards (meters) when free. Some places, including California and New York City, ban them as pets.

Argentine veterinarian Adrian Petta, who specializes in unconventional pets, said he's seen hundreds of animals over the past 18 months of the pandemic—pigs, rabbits, birds, rodents, geckos and the like.

"Many people have felt alone and have sought pets, or they are tired of the television and computers and need more affective relationships," he said. Even with those that show no affection, "people can feed them and feel that someone or something needs them."

That's the case for Osvaldo Negri, a 50-year-old nurse

Negri said he began raising spiders to overcome arachnophobia, and now has 60. He said that caring for then has helped him cope with working at the hospital in the midst of COVID-19, "unplugging" as he watches and sometimes touches the spiders, feeding them cockroaches. "I concentrate on having to move slowly because if they frighten, they could fall" and could die, he said, showing off a colorful and somewhat venomous Mexican tarantula in the palm of his hand.

As with gliders, the choice of pet can be controversial. The red-kneed Brachypelma smithi tarantula he displayed is listed as a "near-threatened" species by the International Union for Conservation of Nature, but the trade in similar arachnoids has helped push 21 other varieties onto its official list of threatened and endangered species.

Illinois man wins marathon after 2 leaders take wrong route

MOLINE, Ill. (AP)—An Illinois man unexpectedly won the Quad Cities Marathon this weekend when the two Kenyan runners who had far outpaced him were disqualified after being diverted off the course by a race volunteer bicyclist.

Tyler Pence crossed the finish line in 2 hours, 15 minutes, 6 seconds to become the first U.S. runner since 2001 to win the race through the Quad Cities along the Mississippi River in Illinois and Iowa. Pence, the head track and cross-country coach at the University of Illinois-Springfield, logged his fastest time ever with the win and took the first prize of $3,000.

Pence's win came after Elijah Mwangangi Saolo and Luke Kibet diverted from the course a little more than halfway to the finish line when the bicycle rider leading them mistakenly went straight when he should have turned, the Quad-City Times reported.

Race director Joe Moreno confirmed that the bicyclist went the wrong way but said the two runners also should have known not to follow him.

"At that intersection where that incident happened, the course was well-marked," Moreno said. "The signage is well-displayed. The volunteers are there. And the fourth element is those elite runners have a meeting the day before to get familiar with the course."

Saolo—the grandson of Kenya running great Joseph Nzau—was on a near-record pace before the mishap. He has been training in New Mexico and trying to scrape together enough money to stay in the U.S. with his wife and two children.

Moreno said the race was planning to find a way to compensate Saolo and Kibet.

Basta! Romans say enough to invasion of wild boars in city

ROME (AP)—Rome has been invaded by Gauls, Visigoths and vandals over the centuries, but the Eternal City is now grappling with a rampaging force of an entirely different sort: rubbish-seeking wild boars.

Entire families of wild boars have become a daily sight in Rome, as groups of 10-30 beasts young and old emerge from the vast parks surrounding the city to trot down traffic-clogged streets in search of food in Rome's notoriously overflowing rubbish bins.

Posting wild boar videos on social media has become something of a sport as exasperated Romans capture the scavengers marching past their stores, strollers or playgrounds.

As Rome gears up for a local election next weekend, the wild boar invasion has been used as a political weapon to attack Mayor Virginia Raggi over the city's formidable garbage collection problems. But experts say the issue is more complicated and tied at least in part to a booming boar population.

Wild boars eat garbages near trash bins in Rome, Friday, Sept. 24, 2021. AP

Italy's main agriculture lobby, Coldiretti, estimates there are over 2 million wild boars in Italy. The region of Lazio surrounding Rome estimates there are 5,000-6,000 of them in city parks, a few hundred of which regularly abandon the trees and green for urban asphalt and trash bins.

To combat their growing numbers, Lazio launched a program in 2019 to capture the beasts in park cages for slaughter, and last month approved a new decree to allow selective hunting of boars in some parks, which until now had been strictly forbidden.

Maurizio Giubbiotti, in charge of Lazio's parks, says the region needs to increase the boar cull from 700 over two years to at least 1,000 annually to get the situation under control.

In Italy's rural areas, hunting wild boar is a popular sport and most Italians can offer a long list of their favorite wild boar dishes, including pappardelle pasta with boar sauce and wild boar stew. But animal rights groups have been adamantly opposed to mass culling.

Those beliefs are not shared by some urban residents.

Science & Technology

Fighting wave of misinformation, YouTube bans false vaccine claims

YouTube announced a sweeping crackdown of vaccine misinformation Wednesday that booted popular anti-vaccine influencers from its site and deleted false claims that have been made about a range of immunizations.

The video-sharing platform said it will no longer allow users to baselessly speculate that approved vaccines, like the ones given to prevent the flu or measles, are dangerous or cause diseases.

YouTube's latest attempt to stem a tide of vaccine misinformation comes as countries around the globe struggle to convince a somewhat vaccine hesitant public to accept the free immunizations that scientists say will end the COVID-19 pandemic that began 20 months ago. The tech platform, which is owned by Google, already tried to ban COVID-19 vaccine misinformation last year, at the height of the pandemic.

"We've steadily seen false claims about the coronavirus vaccines spill over into misinformation about vaccines in general, and we're now at a point where it's more important than ever to expand the work we started with COVID-19 to other vaccines," YouTube said in a blog post.

Up until Wednesday, anti-vaccine influencers, who have thousands of subscribers, had used YouTube to stoke fears around vaccines that health experts point out have been safely administered for decades. The YouTube channel of an organization run by environmental activist Robert F. Kennedy Jr. was one of several popular anti-vaccine accounts that was gone by Wednesday morning.

In an emailed statement to The Associated Press, Kennedy criticized the ban: "There is no instance in history when censorship and secrecy have advanced either democracy or public health."

YouTube declined to provide details on how many accounts were removed in the crackdown.

Under its new policy, YouTube says it will remove misinformation about any vaccine that has been approved by health authorities, such as the World Health Organization, and is currently being administered. False claims that those vaccines are dangerous or cause health issues, like cancer, infertility or autism—theories that scientists have discredited for decades but have endured on the internet—should also be removed.

"The concept that vaccines harm—instead of help—is at the foundation of a lot of misinformation," said Jeanine Guidry, a media and public health professor at Virginia Commonwealth University School of Medicine.

She added that, if enforced properly, the new rules could stop bad information from influencing a new parent who is using the internet to research whether or not to vaccinate their child, for example.

But, as is common when tech platforms announce stricter rules, loopholes remain for anti-vaccine misinformation to spread on YouTube.

Claims about vaccines that are being tested will still be allowed. Personal stories about reactions to the vaccine will also be permitted, as long as they do not come from an account that has a history of promoting vaccine misinformation.

Despite tech companies announcing a string of new rules around COVID-19 and vaccine misinformation during the pandemic, falsehoods have still found big audiences on the platforms.

In March, Twitter began labelling content that made misleading claims about COVID-19 vaccines and said it would ban accounts that repeatedly share such posts. Facebook, which also owns Instagram, had already prohibited posts claiming COVID-19 vaccines cause infertility or contain tracking microchips, and in February announced it would similarly remove claims that vaccines are toxic or can cause health problems such as autism. ***(AP)***

Activist, historian, writer among 'genius grant' recipients

CHICAGO (AP)—A historian devoted to keeping alive the stories of long-dead victims of racial violence along the Texas-Mexico border and a civil rights activist whose mission is to make sure people who leave prison are free to walk into the voting booth are among this year's MacArthur fellows and recipients of "genius grants."

The Chicago-based John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation on Tuesday announced the 25 recipients, who will each receive $625,000.

The historian and the activist are part of an eclectic group that includes scientists, economists, poets, and filmmakers. As in previous years, the work of several recipients involves topics that have been dominating the news—from voting rights to how history is taught in schools.

Race figures prominently in the work of about half of them, including that of Ibram X. Kendi, author of "How to be an Antiracist" and "Stamped from the Beginning," which was a National Book Award winner for nonfiction.

There is a generation of older and younger writers, thinkers and creators who are able to recognize the "complexity of racism" and "clarify it for everyday people to see it and grasp it and be outraged by it," Kendi said.

Science Matters
Phases in Earth's 4.6-billion-year history
Hadean period
Storm of meteorites churned molten surface
'Snowball' age
Hypothetical; from 650 million to 530 million years ago
Post-snowball
Oceans soon thawed; new life forms evolved
Life after ancient 'Snowball Earth'
Researchers are one step closer to understanding how life evolved before and after the ancient "Snowball Earth" ice age that covered the planet with glaciers and frozen seas.
1 Late in Snowball age, greenhouse gas carbon dioxide from volcanos warmed atmosphere to 140°F (60°C)
2 Single-cell life forms in seas rapidly evolved into multi-cell creatures; photosynthetic organisms thrived in abundant CO_2
3 The photosynthesis pumped oxygen into the air; new life exploded in Cambrian period
Mysterious multi-cellular life forms
In Ediacaran period after the Snowball age, flat leaf-like and tubular animals evolved worldwide, the first complex multicellular organisms
Illustration by Ryan Somma
Some evidence indicates that in addition to glaciers and snow fields, Earth had large slushy seas during the Snowball
Other Snowball ages may have occurred about 2.4 billion and 850 million years ago
Thermal vents on the sea floor – and their life forms – would have kept cooking
Source: Kunio Kaiho and Atena Shizuya of Tohoku University (Japan); Global and Planetary Change journal; NASA
Graphic: Helen McComas, Tribune News Service
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TECH Q&A

By STEVE ALEXANDER
Star Tribune (Minneapolis)

Steve Alexander covers technology for the Minneapolis Star Tribune. *Readers may write to him at Tech Q&A, 425 Portland Ave. S., Minneapolis, Minn. 55488-0002; Email tech questions to Steve Alexander at steve.j.alexander@gmail.com. Please include a full name, city and phone number.*

Here's what hackers do to get past password attempt limits, and what you can do

Q: Many password-protected websites give you a few chances to type in your password correctly, then lock you out if you type the wrong thing. You then must type in a code or answer a "secret question" to prove who you are.

So why do I see TV shows in which smart criminals use a computer to test, say, 10,000 passwords a minute until they get the right one to break into a website? Why aren't the criminals locked out after a few wrong passwords?

A: The TV shows are less far-fetched than you might think.

The scenario you're describing is called a "brute force" attack. A computer connects to a web server and rapidly tries a long list of possible passwords until it hits the right one. A real brute force attack would require about two hours to crack an eight-character password composed of letters (upper and lower case), numbers and special characters (see tinyurl.com/4r2debx3).

How would the attackers avoid being locked out during those two hours? Sophisticated hackers could disable the server's "intrusion detection system," or its automatic "password attempt limit" (which normally locks a person out after a few wrong tries).

But because brute force attacks require some expertise, they're less common than a simpler threat called a "dictionary attack." The "dictionary" is a short list of common passwords that a computer can try in much less than two hours. These attacks succeed when people use simple passwords, such as "password" and "123456," which take fractions of a second to crack.

While it's hard to believe that people still use such vulnerable passwords, here's an interesting fact: The 2019 attack on Texas IT company SolarWinds, which allowed hackers to spy on the federal government, may have been caused by an employee who used the server password "solarwinds123." And, based on information from other data breaches, here's a list of the most common passwords of 2020, how often they were hacked and how little time it took (see tinyurl.com/zu-2ekpdt). The password list includes "abc123," "111111" and "iloveyou."

The best defense against brute force and dictionary attacks is to use a password that is a long combination of letters, numbers and symbols that would be meaningless to anyone but you. These so-called "nonpredictable passwords" are far more difficult to hack.

Q: I keep getting a Windows 10 message that's supposed to be from Microsoft—but I wonder if it's a scam. It reads: "We need to fix your Microsoft account (most likely your password changed). Select here to fix it in shared experiences settings." Are you familiar with this?

A: It's a legitimate Microsoft warning, but it's being triggered by a Windows 10 error. Several fixes have been suggested:

Disable your PC's "share across devices" feature, which makes it easy to exchange data with other computers and phones. (See the "settings app" method at tinyurl.com/3dknadj3.)

If you are logging into Windows 10 with your online Microsoft account password, switch to a "local" account that doesn't depend on your online identity (see tinyurl.com/act82bu4).

Make sure your PC is a "trusted device" that's listed in your Microsoft account (see tinyurl.com/sykz6wzk).

Email tech questions to Steve Alexander at steve.j.alexander@gmail.com. Please include a full name, city and phone number.

Life & Style

Judge suspends Britney Spears' father from conservatorship

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Britney Spears has been freed from her father. And she could be freed entirely from court control within weeks.

In a major victory for the pop star, a judge on Wednesday suspended the singer's father from the conservatorship that has controlled her life and money for 13 years, saying the arrangement "reflects a toxic environment."

Los Angeles Superior Court Judge Brenda Penny agreed with a petition from Spears and her attorney that James Spears needs to give up his role as conservator. The decision comes months after the Britney Spears pleaded for her father's removal in dramatic court hearings, saying, "I want my life back."

"The current situation is untenable," the judge said after hearing arguments from both sides. "It reflects a toxic environment which requires the suspension of James Spears."

And with no objections to ending the conservatorship, Penny is likely to terminate it at a Nov. 12 hearing, restoring the singer's life and money choices to her after years of increasingly vocal calls to #FreeBritney that she eventually joined.

James Spears sought the conservatorship in 2008 and had been its primary controller and biggest champion. He reversed course in recent weeks, asking the judge to end the conservatorship immediately, arguing that would render his removal pointless.

The singer and her attorney agreed that the conservatorship should end, but argued that James Spears' removal was an essential first step.

Britney Spears was not present at the hearing and did not participate in any way. Her father connected remotely but did not speak during the proceedings. His attorney argued that there was no justification for his removal.

"There is not a shred of evidence to support suspension," lawyer Vivian Thoreen told the judge. "His record is impeccable."

Penny said her decision was "unappealable," but Thoreen said she would explore options for appeal regardless.

The singer's attorney, Mathew Rosengart, said after the hearing that Britney Spears "has been faced with a decade-long nightmare, Kafkaesque nightmare orchestrated by her father and others." Rosengart pledged to pursue "even more serious ramifications for his misconduct."

The attorney said he planned to take a "top-to-bottom look" at the actions of James Spears and his representatives and suggested that law enforcement should investigate revelations in The New York Times about a listening device placed in his daughter's bedroom.

Fans were elated by the ruling.

"My heart's racing out of my chest," said Lorin Sisco of Hawaii, who flew to Los Angeles for the hearing and said she's been at the courthouse for every proceeding for the past year. "I am so excited for what she has to do with the rest of her life."

Britney Spears supporter Brian Molina of Los Angeles celebrates outside the Stanley Mosk Courthouse, Wednesday, Sept. 29, 2021, in Los Angeles. AP

Man who broke into Eminem's home gets probation, time served

CLINTON TOWNSHIP, Mich. (AP)—A man who broke into Eminem's suburban Detroit home and allegedly told the rapper "he was there to kill him" has been sentenced to five years probation and time served.

Matthew Hughes, 28, was sentenced last week by a Macomb County Circuit Court judge under a plea and sentencing deal with county prosecutors, the Macomb Daily reported. He was released after serving 524 days in the county jail.

Hughes said little at the hearing and made confusing statements in his presentencing report, said his attorney, Richard Glanda.

Eminem, who agreed with the outcome, did not attend the hearing.

Hughes wasn't armed when he was discovered early on April 5, 2020, in Eminem's home in Clinton Township. Eminem, whose real name is Marshall Mathers, was sleeping when he was awakened by the noise of Hughes breaking a kitchen door window with a brick paver.

Hughes allegedly told the rapper "he was there to kill him," according to court testimony.

Eminem got Hughes to leave the house, where he was met by security guards and held until police arrived.

In August, Hughes pleaded no contest to a reduced charge of second-degree home invasion in exchange for dismissal of charges of first-degree home invasion, malicious destruction of property between $1,000 and $20,000 and assault of a jail employee. A no contest plea is not an admission of guilt but is treated as such at sentencing.

Evel Knievel's son loses Disney Duke Caboom trademark case

LAS VEGAS (AP)—A judge dismissed a trademark infringement lawsuit filed by Evel Knievel's son a year ago against the Walt Disney Co. and movie company Pixar over a "Toy Story 4" daredevil character named Duke Caboom.

An email message from The Walt Disney Co. spokesman Jeffrey R. Epstein said he was traveling and unavailable for immediate comment.

Kelly Knievel, head of Las Vegas-based K and K Promotions, had characterized the Caboom character as "a direct knock-off of the legend and historical significance" of Knievel's father, the famous stunt motorcyclist who died in 2007 at 69 in Florida of lung disease.

The lawsuit filed in September 2020 accused Disney and Pixar of intentionally modeling the "Toy Story 4" character on Knievel, whose stunts included motorcycle jumps in 1967 over the Caesars Palace fountain in Las Vegas—including a spectacular near-fatal crash—and in 1975 over a row of buses at Wembley Stadium in London.

Evel Knievel was seriously injured many times during more than 75 motorcycle jumps. He survived a 1974 rocket-motorcycle shot over Snake River Canyon in Idaho that ended with the machine parachuting to the riverbank below.

The lawsuit noted an Evel Knievel Stunt Cycle toy released in 1973 featured a Knievel action figure clad in a white helmet and jumpsuit with red, white and blue embellishments on a motorcycle that could be propelled with a wind-up device.

The court filing pointed to the film character and his "Duke Caboom Stunt Cycle," described by Disney Pixar as a 1970s-era daredevil based on "Canada's greatest stuntman," clad in a white jumpsuit and helmet with Canadian insignia.

"We're obviously disappointed," Kelly Knievel said in a Monday email. "We are considering our options" at the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals in San Francisco.

U.S. District Judge James Mahan in Las Vegas dismissed the case against Walt Disney Studios Motion Pictures on Sept. 23.

The judge wrote that while the Caboom character was "reminiscent" of Knievel, "Disney's use of Evel Knievel's likeness contains significant transformative elements" and is not a literal depiction.

Woman dumbfounded by fiance's intolerance

DEAR ABBY: About a year ago, my fiance of six years revealed that he doesn't think homosexuality is normal or right. I was shocked because he had never mentioned it before, nor did I see any signs that he thought that way. We've gone to Pride celebrations, and we both have gay relatives and friends.

When we discuss how we will raise our children, it always winds up in an argument. He doesn't want our future children to be influenced by gay people on TV and doesn't want me to "encourage" it. He did say that, after the child turns 18, he would accept what they "choose." I would like to teach my children to accept people's true selves.

I have tried reasoning with him and using logic as to why there's nothing wrong with gay people and begged him to think about it from their perspective. Nothing I can say changes his mind. He was raised by a very "macho" father who thinks the same way. What should I do? Do you think a marriage would survive this kind of disagreement? Would therapy help?

MORE ACCEPTING IN CALIFORNIA

DEAR MORE ACCEPTING: Be glad your fiance has been honest with you about this—even if it's five years late. One would think that having gay friends and a gay relative would have shown him that sexual orientation isn't something a person "chooses." Gay people can no more help being attracted to members of the same sex than straight people can help being attracted to people of the opposite sex.

Therapy can be helpful and provide valuable insight to individuals who are willing to admit they need it. I hope your fiance will consider this. Children come out much earlier today than in years past, and it's important they feel safe doing it. Being forced to wait longer could cause damage that lasts a lifetime. For your sake and theirs, get to the core of what is going on with this man, and decide what to do accordingly.

■ ■ ■ ■

DEAR ABBY: I was divorced 33 years ago. My son was a year old at the time. My ex was doing drugs and had lost his job. He never paid alimony or child support or acknowledged any birthdays or Christmas, so we struggled for many years to buy the necessities. We have grown close to a few of his family members over the last few years.

My son is now about to be married. My ex is not invited to the ceremony, but he sent a nice amount of money. My son and I are torn about what we should do. I feel my son deserves the money, but it isn't even close to making up for 34 years of neglect. So, how do you say "thank you" for something that's too little and far too late?

MOM OF THE GROOM

DEAR MOM: How to say "thank you" is not your problem. Your son and his fiancee should deal with this as they wish, including accepting the money. (Newlyweds can always use the money.)

What teens need to know about sex, drugs, AIDS and getting along with peers and parents is in "What Every Teen Should Know." Send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for $8 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby, Teen Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Shipping and handling are included in the price.)

DEAR ABBY

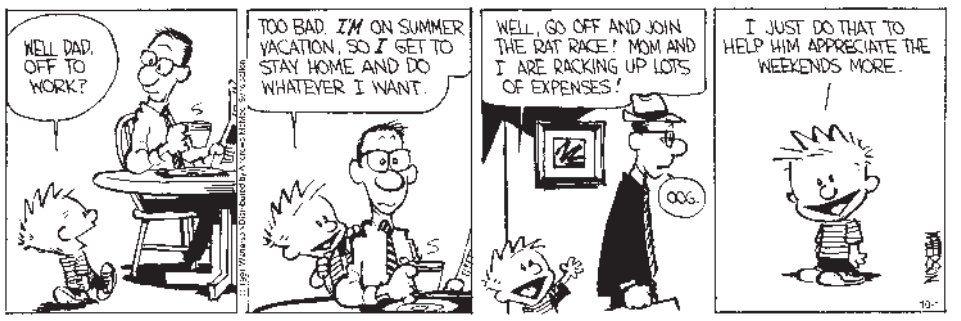
By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN
FROM UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

Pastimes

Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson


WELL DAD, OFF TO WORK?
TOO BAD. I'M ON SUMMER VACATION, SO I GET TO STAY HOME AND DO WHATEVER I WANT.
WELL, GO OFF AND JOIN THE RAT RACE! MOM AND I ARE RACKING UP LOTS OF EXPENSES!
OOG.
I JUST DO THAT TO HELP HIM APPRECIATE THE WEEKENDS MORE.

Garfield®

By Jim Davis

I LOVE YOU, BECAUSE YOU'RE THE PRETTIEST GIRL IN THE WHOLE WORLD
AND I LOVE YOU, BECAUSE YOU HAVEN'T EMBARRASSED ME IN PUBLIC FOR THREE WHOLE DAYS
IT IS A NEW RECORD FOR ME
YOU DA MAN
JIM DAVIS 10-1

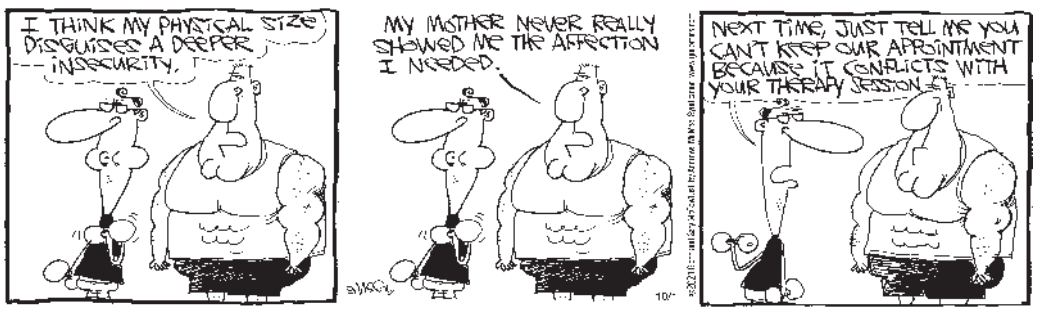
Adam@home

By Bryan Basset

WHILE YOUR NECK IS STUCK, YOU WANT A GUMMY WORM?
SURE.
OKAY. BUT YOU HAVE TO CHIRP LIKE A BABY BIRD.
KATY, THAT'S RIDICULOUS. I'M NOT ABOUT TO...
THEY'RE SOUR GUMMY WORMS.
CHIRP! CHIRP CHIRP CHIRP!!
HARRELL
10-1

The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy


I THINK MY PHYSICAL SIZE DISGUISES A DEEPER INSECURITY.
MY MOTHER NEVER REALLY SHOWED ME THE AFFECTION I NEEDED.
NEXT TIME, JUST TELL ME YOU CAN'T KEEP OUR APPOINTMENT BECAUSE IT CONFLICTS WITH YOUR THERAPY SESSION.

CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS

1 Tours season
4 Admin. aide
8 Hawaiian coast
12 Prom rental
13 Rating unit
14 Done with
15 Dissertation
17 Took a bike, say
18 Straighten
19 Born
21 Menlo Park monogram
22 Some Emmy winners
26 Fake drake
29 Wooden pin
30 Conceit
31 Piece of work
32 Wee bit
33 Gunk
34 Not 'neath
35 Web address
36 Liberates
37 Period of self-care
39 Winter ailment
40 — de deux
41 Holiday Inn rival
45 Low horn
48 Quivers
50 Eager
51 Ore deposit
52 Sweetie, slangily
53 Tatters
54 Seth's son
55 Parseghian of football

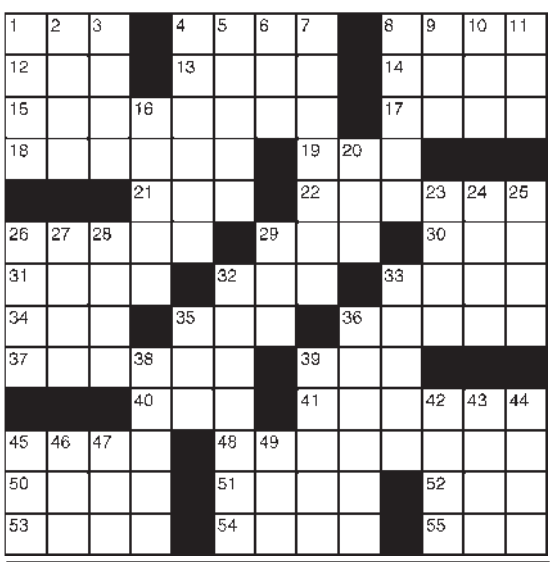
DOWN

1 Words to Brutus
2 Rotate
3 Corp. bigwig
4 Off-course
5 Subway entrance
6 Airline to Sweden
7 Was hot, on Twitter
8 Seoul setting
9 Egg (Pref.)
10 Actor Beatty
11 Exist
16 Road runners
20 Work unit
23 Simple
24 Malaria symptom
25 Freshens lawns
26 Dire fate
27 Duel tool
28 Brusque
29 Churn
32 Bridge support
33 Bread morsel
35 Ms. Thurman
36 Pilot lights
38 Apple tablets
39 A Corleone brother
42 Goya's duchess
43 Beloved
44 On the Baltic, say
45 Sailor
46 A.C.C. school
47 Huge
49 Director Howard

Solution time: 25 mins.

V	A	S	E	■	G	R	A	I	N	■	R	E	P
I	B	I	S	■	A	O	N	E	■	E	N	O
P	U	N	C	H	■	I	N	E	■	D	Y	E
S	■	E	A	M	S	■	■	D	R	E	A	M
■	■	■	P	M	■	T	H	I	E	F	■	■
B	I	G	C	■	T	R	C	■	F	I	J	I
A	M	A	■	■	O	F	R	■	■	N	A	M
P	O	L	O	■	M	N	O	■	W	E	B	S
■	■	■	A	R	C	E	D	■	L	A	■	■
D	U	M	B	O	■	■	N	O	R	W	A	Y
A	R	I	■	P	O	R	C	U	P	I	N	E
T	I	N	■	A	R	E	A	■	E	D	N	A
F	S	F	■	Y	O	D	A	■	D	F	A	R

Yesterday's answer 10-1



STUMPED? For answers to today's crossword, call **1-900-226-5955!** 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Brie Larson, 32; Zach Galifianakis, 52; Esai Morales, 59; Julie Andrews, 86.

Happy Birthday: Embrace life; don't put limitations on what you can achieve. It's up to you to turn whatever comes your way into an opportunity and to ride the wave to shore without hesitation. Expand your mind, use your physical capabilities and explore what life has to offer. Be the master of your universe and the creator of your future. Your numbers are 8, 15, 21, 23, 29, 37, 41.

ARIES *(March 21-April 19):* You can have fun without overspending. Choose to be with people who are happy to be around you, and you with them, and you'll avoid the pressure of keeping up with someone overbearing. Take responsibility for your happiness. ✪✪✪✪

TAURUS *(April 20-May 20):* Things are speeding up and changing fast. Do a reality check before you jump into something that has too many variables. When in doubt, take a pass and avoid the drama that comes with stressful situations and people who are unstable. ✪✪

GEMINI *(May 21-June 20):* Plan to get together with people you know and trust to abide by the rules. Don't let an outsider disrupt your life or the goals you set out to accomplish. Take control of a situation, and you'll avoid letting someone take you for granted. ✪✪✪✪

CANCER *(June 21-July 22):* Be cautious not to take on more than you can handle. Generosity will leave you in a compromising position. Take a step back and consider what's doable before you promise more than you can deliver. Be gracious but reasonable. ✪✪✪

LEO *(July 23-Aug. 22):* Deep breathing will help you navigate your way through emotional ups and downs. A little patience, a sense of humor and a positive attitude will encourage others to calm down and make better decisions. Home improvements will gratify you. ✪✪✪

VIRGO *(Aug. 23-Sept. 22):* Think matters through before you decide to alter your course. Having everything in order will be mandatory if you want to avoid stress and become successful. Draw on your charm as well as your intelligence to get your way. Romance is encouraged. ✪✪✪

LIBRA *(Sept. 23-Oct. 22):* Think outside the box. Turn your ideas into something concrete. Take on responsibilities that will beef up your resume or draw attention from those in a position to help you advance. Take the initiative to pursue what brings you joy. ✪✪✪✪

SCORPIO *(Oct. 23-Nov. 21):* Observation will lead to the answers you want. Pay attention, and you'll come up with a plan that will put you in the driver's seat. Keep your goals simple, flexible and ready to initiate, and everything will fall into place. ✪✪

SAGITTARIUS *(Nov. 22-Dec. 21):* Invest time and money in something that will benefit you, your family or your community. What you have to offer will turn into an opportunity to lead to a profitable position or pursuit. Do not share personal information. ✪✪✪✪✪

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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CAPRICORN *(Dec. 22-Jan. 19):* Keep a low profile, show interest in what others do and look for alternative ways to get ahead. You are overdue for a change, but how you go about it will determine how successful things will turn out for you. ✪✪✪

AQUARIUS *(Jan. 20-Feb. 18):* Don't limit what you can do when expansion, new interests and finding joy in what you do are what are required. Having a purpose and accomplishing something that makes you feel good will lead to better relationships with loved ones. ✪✪✪

PISCES *(Feb. 19-March 20):* Volunteer for something that will make a difference to a cause you believe in, and it will encourage you to use your skills differently. Finish what you start, and enjoy a little downtime with someone you love. Romance is encouraged. ✪✪✪

Birthday Baby: You are opportunistic, dedicated and resourceful. You are energetic and demonstrative.

✪: Avoid conflicts; work behind the scenes. ✪✪: You can accomplish, but don't rely on others. ✪✪✪: Focus and you'll reach your goals. ✪✪✪✪: Aim high; start new projects. ✪✪✪✪✪: Nothing can stop you; go for gold.

SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku *By Dave Green*

8						4	3
5			2	6			
		3		8		9	
						6	
	4	2				1	8
	5						
		8		9		3	
				5	8		1
7	6						2

Difficulty Level ★★★★ 10/01

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Yesterday's Answer

2	3	5	9	6	7	1	8	4
8	4	6	5	1	3	7	2	9
9	1	7	4	8	2	3	5	6
1	2	4	7	5	9	6	3	8
3	5	8	6	2	1	4	9	7
7	6	9	3	4	8	5	1	2
6	9	1	8	3	4	2	7	5
5	7	2	1	9	6	8	4	3
4	8	3	2	7	5	9	6	1

Difficulty level ★★★

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WONDERWORD

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally and even backward. Find them, circle each letter of the word and strike it off the list. The leftover letters spell the **WONDERWORD.**

CANADIAN LAKES Solution: 10 letters

G	A	B	O	T	I	N	A	M	S	T	U	O	R	T
O	S	N	A	V	E	V	A	L	S	A	N	D	Y	U
U	N	I	O	N	E	C	O	U	O	E	C	E	Y	V
I	F	O	Y	R	K	R	P	H	R	Ⓑ	G	D	U	A
N	N	A	G	A	U	E	I	O	C	Ⓞ	N	I	K	N
A	P	I	Y	I	R	H	D	A	G	Ⓐ	S	H	O	U
G	S	E	T	I	P	I	I	A	L	Ⓣ	N	T	N	N
A	A	I	O	L	S	I	M	D	B	C	R	O	Y	O
U	B	R	M	L	E	E	N	U	S	E	E	D	N	T
O	E	E	A	C	R	U	F	B	T	D	K	U	I	S
C	R	N	R	H	O	F	N	A	A	N	A	C	A	I
I	D	E	P	F	A	E	W	W	R	O	B	K	R	L
N	E	M	W	L	A	C	A	N	I	P	O	E	N	L
A	E	E	O	G	R	E	A	T	B	E	A	R	G	I
M	N	A	E	J	T	N	I	A	S	D	O	O	W	W

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Aberdeen, Baker, Boat, Buffalo, Claire, Cree, Cross, Dore, Dubawnt, Ducker, Erie, Evans, Gouin, Great Bear, Huron, Island, Mackay, Manicouagan, Manitoba, Memphremagog, Newfoundland, Nipigon, Nonacho, Nueltin, Nunavut, Opinaca, Payne, Pond, Rainy, Saint-Jean, Sandy, Simcoe, Slave, Star, Superior, Trout, Waterton, Williston, Woods, Yukon

Yesterday's Answer: Airplane

Jo's Jewels Collector's Edition is back by popular demand! Purchase online at www.WonderWordBooks.com or call 1-800-642-6480.

Bichette powers Jays past Yanks, AL wild card race tightens

TORONTO (AP) — Bo Bichette homered twice, including a tiebreaking drive off Clay Holmes in the eighth inning that lifted the Toronto Blue Jays over the Yankees 6-5 Wednesday night, tightened the AL wild card race and ended New York's seven-game winning streak.

Marcus Semien hit a go-ahead, two-run homer in the first off a faltering Gerrit Cole, setting a big league record with his 44th home run of the season as a second baseman.

With the score 5-all, Bichette led off the eighth against Holmes (8-4) with his 28th home run, an opposite-field drive that cleared the scoreboard in right-center.

Adam Cimber (3-4) got four outs for the win. With a runner on second, Jordan Romano retired Tyler Wade on a game-ending flyout for his 22nd save in 23 chances.

Boston closed within one game of the wild card-leading Yankees after winning 6-0 at Baltimore, and Toronto is one game back of the Red Sox. Seattle is a half-game behind the Blue Jays after winning 4-2 over Oakland.

AP

Toronto Blue Jays second baseman Santiago Espinal puts the home run jacket on shortstop Bo Bichette (11) after he homered during the third inning of a baseball game against the New York Yankees in Toronto on Wednesday Sept. 29, 2021.

Brewers 4, Cardinals 0

In St. Louis, St. Louis' team-record 17-game winning streak ended as Milwaukee's Daniel Vogelbach hit a two-run homer that backed Adrian Houser.

Manny Piña added a solo homer for the NL Central champion Brewers, who have won four of five.

A night after clinching a postseason berth, the Cardinals did not start regulars Nolan Arenado, Tyler O'Neill and Tommy Edman.

Houser (10-6) allowed three hits in five innings.

Vogelbach homered in the sixth off Miles Mikolas (2-3), who allowed three runs and seven hits in 5 2/3 innings.

Braves 7, Phillies 2

In Atlanta, Max Fried pitched seven strong innings, Austin Riley drove in three runs, and Atlanta beat Philadelphia to move within one victory of a fourth straight NL East title.

The Braves have won nine of 11 and reduced their magic number to one. Philadelphia, which dropped 4 1/2 games back in the standings with its third straight loss, can be eliminated from postseason contention with one loss or one Atlanta win.

Fried (14-7) improved to 7-0 with a 1.46 ERA over his last 11 starts. The lefty allowed two runs—one earned—and four hits with no walks and six strikeouts.

Aaron Nola (9-9) gave up three runs and seven hits in six innings.

Red Sox 6, Orioles 0

In Baltimore, J.D. Martinez homered and drove in three runs to back a dominant pitching performance by Nathan Eovaldi, and Boston beat Baltimore to break a four-game skid and bolster its playoff hopes.

Martinez hit his 28th homer in the second inning for a 1-0 lead, and the Red Sox used a broken-bat single and an error to tack on two unearned runs in the sixth.

Eovaldi (11-9) took it from there, limiting Baltimore to four hits and striking out seven over six innings.

Rookie Zac Lowther (1-3) was pulled after Rafael Devers cracked his bat on a leadoff single in the sixth. Xander Bogaerts subsequently reached on an error by third baseman Kelvin Gutiérrez before Martinez smacked a two-run double.

The victory enabled the Red Sox to move within a game of the New York Yankees for the top AL wild card. Seattle remained a half-game behind Boston for the other wild-card spot, with Toronto one game in back of the Red Sox.

Rays 7, Astros 0

In Houston, Drew Rasmussen and three relievers combined for a three-hitter, Brandon Lowe and Ji-Man Choi both homered and Tampa Bay coasted past Houston to earn the No. 1 seed in the AL playoffs.

Tampa Bay improved to 98-60, outdoing the 2008 team for most wins in franchise history.

The Astros lost for the fifth time in six games and their magic number to win the AL West is still one over Seattle, which beat Oakland 4-2.

Rays rookie Wander Franco doubled and singled twice, and safely reached base for the 43rd straight game, tying him with Frank Robinson in 1956 for the longest streak by a player at age 20 or younger.

Rasmussen (4-1) allowed one hit over five innings.

Rookie Luis Garcia (11-8) permitted seven hits and six runs, but only three were earned.

Mariners 4, Athletics 2

In Seattke, Seattle won for the 10th time in 11 games and stayed in the thick of the AL wild-card race with a win over Oakland.

Ty France's sacrifice fly in the seventh inning gave Seattle the lead and Abraham Toro added some cushion with his first home run since Aug. 31 with two outs in the eighth inning.

Seattle stayed a half-game behind Boston for the second wild-card slot and is 1½ games behind New York for the top spot, trying to end a 20-year drought since last reaching the postseason. The Mariners have an off day on Thursday before starting their final series of the regular season at home against the Los Angeles Angles.

Seattle won its 12th straight game over Oakland, the longest win streak over a single team in franchise history, and in the process eliminated the A's from postseason contention. The A's had reached the playoffs in three straight years and six of the last nine.

The Mariners also delayed Houston from clinching the AL West for at least one more day. The Astros' magic number stayed at one.

Diego Castillo (5-5) earned the win, and Drew Steckenrider picked up his 13th save. Andrew Chafin (2-4) took the loss for Oakland, which got homers from Tony Kemp and Seth Brown.

Giants 1, Diamondbacks 0

In San Francisco, Alex Wood and three relievers combined for a four-hitter, Kris Bryant hit a sacrifice fly and San Francisco reached 104 wins for the first time since 1905 by beating Arizona.

The NL West-leading Giants joined the 1945-46 Boston Red Sox as the only two teams to follow a losing season with 104 wins.

Wood was dominant in his third start since coming off the COVID-19 list, allowing three hits in six innings with six strikeouts.

Dominic Leone (4-5) retired three batters, Jarlin García followed and Camilo Doval pitched the ninth for his second save.

Tommy La Stella singled leading off the seventh against Noé Ramirez (0-2). Pinch-runner Steven Duggar stole second and was sacrificed to third before Bryant hit a low liner to right to score Duggar.

White Sox 6, Reds 1

In Chicago, Carlos Rodón pitched five scoreless innings in a closely watched start ahead of the playoffs, and Chicago beat Cincinnati.

Tim Anderson and Gavin Sheets homered as the White Sox (91-68) moved a season-high 23 games above .500 with their fourth consecutive victory.

Rodón (13-5) allowed one hit, struck out four and walked two in his first start since he lasted three innings in a 4-3 loss at Detroit on Sept. 20.

Cincinnati right-hander Sonny Gray (7-9) was charged with five runs and five hits in 4 2/3 innings.

Royals 10, Indians 5

In Kansas City, Mo., Salvador Perez tied a Royals record with his 48th homer of the season before leaving with a sprained right ankle, and Kansas City went on to beat Cleveland.

Perez, who already broke the big league record for homers by a catcher, leads the majors in home runs and RBIs (121).

He homered on the first pitch he saw from Zach Plesac and struck out in the second inning before being replaced in the third by Cam Gallagher.

Hunter Dozier hit a tie-breaking two-run triple in the seventh and scored on a wild pitch by Nick Wittgren (2-9) to make it 8-5.

Greg Holland (3-5), the third of five Royals pitchers, earned the win with two hitless innings.

Angels 7, Rangers 2

In Arlington, Texas, Shohei Ohtani sparked a four-run sixth-inning rally with his legs, and Los Angeles sent Texas to its first 100-loss season since 1973.

With the score 2-2, Ohtani led off the sixth with a sharp grounder to first baseman Nathaniel Lowe and beat pitcher Taylor Hearn to the bag. Ohtani stole second, continued to third on a throwing error by catcher Jose Trevino and came home when Jack Mayfield singled through a drawn-in infield.

Texas put runners on the corners with none out in the sixth against reliever Austin Warren, but Jose Quijada (1-2) struck out the next three batters to earn his first win since July 2019.

Hearn (6-6) allowed four runs and six hits in 5 1/3 innings.

Marlins 3, Mets 2

In New York, Miguel Rojas' two-run single capped a three-run rally in the eighth inning, spoiling Taijuan Walker's longest start in more than four years and sending Miami past New York.

Miami snapped a seven-game losing streak while the Mets lost for the 11th time in 14 games.

Walker carried a one-hit shutout into the eighth. He allowed a leadoff double to Lewin Diaz and left with one out after a four-pitch walk to Eddy Alvarez.

Alex Jackson greeted Seth Lugo (4-3) with an RBI double. Rojas blooped his go-ahead single with two outs.

Steven Okert (3-1) allowed one hit in a scoreless seventh. Richard Bleier tossed a one-hit eighth before Dylan Floro threw a perfect ninth for his 13th save.

Rockies 10, Nationals 5

In Denver, Trevor Story had four hits in possibly his final appearance at Coors Field with Colorado, which beat Washington.

Ryan McMahon added a three-run homer in the Rockies' home finale, which was interrupted for two hours by rain.

The Nationals' Juan Soto was 1 for 4 with an RBI and is hitting .318 as he chases the NL batting title.

Ashton Goudeau (2-1) earned the win. Mason Thompson (1-3) took the loss.

Cubs 3, Pirates 2

In Pittsburgh, Willson Contreras drove in all of Chicago's runs as the Cubs beat Pittsburgh to to end a seven-game losing streak.

Contreras' two-run double high off the right-field wall in the seventh inning off Nick Mears, who relieved Chasen Shreve (3-3), rallied the Cubs from a 2-1 deficit.

Bryan Reynolds became the first Pirates player to hit two triples in a game since Josh Harrison in 2014.

Adam Morgan (2-1) pitched one scoreless inning of relief for the win. Codi Heuer notched his second save with a perfect ninth inning.

Twins 5, Tigers 2

In Minneapolis, Jorge Polanco launched a three-run homer in the first inning and Michael Pineda was solid in his last start of the year as Minnesota beat Detroit.

Polanco's 32nd homer of the season gave him 94 RBIs, both team highs.

Pineda (9-8) allowed one run and scattered eight hits over 5 2/3 innings in what could be his final game with the Twins.

Casey Mize (7-9) settled down after the first but lasted just four innings. He finished his season with a 3.71 ERA in 30 starts.

Devil Dog sniffing distance from league leaders

By MARK RABAGO
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ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Devil Dog Warriors maintained its stranglehold of third place after routing SMA Flyers, 78-33, in the nightcap of the Island-wide Men's Bud-Light Basketball League last Wednesday at the Tinian Multi-Purpose Gymnasium.

The Marines got to work early by erecting a 27-9 advantage after the first 10 minutes of action thanks to the 8 points of Damon Kada. Devil Dog continued to blast holes on the Flyers' Swiss cheese defense in the second quarter as they expanded their lead, 44-20, at the halftime break.

Kada then got some help from Zjointi Kubinski in the third as Devil Dog continued to lord it over a lifeless Star Marianas crew and headed into the fourth and final quarter on top by 35 whopping points, 61-26.

It was all over but the shouting in the final 10 minutes of the contest as the Warriors notched its seventh win in nine games, a few games back of 9-0 Team Kio and 8-1 Rampage, while SMA Flyers is now in a triple tie for last place at 2-7.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Devil Dog Warriors pose for a photo after their win over SMA Flyers in the Island-wide Men's BudLight Basketball League last Wednesday at the Tinian Multi-Purpose Gymnasium.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

RNV players pose for a photo after their win over FPA Power Builders in the Island-wide Men's BudLight Basketball League last Wednesday at the Tinian Multi-Purpose Gymnasium.

Kubinski led Devil Dog in scoring with 20 points, while Kada ably backed him up with 17 markers of his own. The 10 points Tanley Villagracia was the lone bright spot for SMA Flyers.

In the curtain raiser, RNV avoided dropping to the cellar after escaping with a 63-58 win over FPA Power Builders. It was a tight game all throughout with RNV only leading 28-22 after the first quarter on the hot shooting of Jhello Bungabong and Dexter Bucayag. Michael Castro carried the load for Power Builders in the second quarter as both teams scored 8 points apiece for a 36-30 count at the half.

Castro continue to wax hot in the third, firing 7 points as Power Builders managed to cut RNV's lead to 5 points, 49-44 heading into the payoff period. But RNV recovered just in time in the final frame, getting a combined 9 points from Bungabong and Felipe Laoyon in the fourth to get away with the close 5-point win.

Bungabong, Laowon, Bucayag scored at last 12 points each for the now 3-7 RNV, while Castro paced Power Builders with 23 points. J.R. Libut had a relatively off night with 18 markers. Power Builders joined SMA Flyers and Navy Ko'Bees in the last place at 2-7.

First Game

RNV 63 – Bungabong 13, Laowon 12, Bucayag 12, Borca 10, Rizardo 4, Naguiling 4, Udaundo 3, Villacrusis 3, Molina 2.

Power Builders 58 – Castro 23, J. Libut 18, Apatan 9, Sanchez 4, D. Libut 2, Delos Reyes 2.

Scoring by quarters: 28-22, 36-30, 49-44, 63-58.

Second Game

Devil Dog Warriors 78 – Kubinski 20, Kada 17, Montgomery 12, James 7, Lapan 6, Carrasco 4, Sakaian 4, Ogaldez 4, Wayland 2.

SMA Flyers 33 – Villagracia 10, Doria 9, Opanda 4, Cajilla 4, Lagunay 4, Fletchar 2.

Scoring by quarters: 27-9,

NFL urges players, team staff to report COVID-19 symptoms

The NFL is stressing the importance of symptom reporting to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in a video featuring coaches Pete Carroll, Andy Reid, John Harbaugh and Ron Rivera.

"It is vital for all players, coaches and other personnel to understand and report symptoms immediately," NFL Commissioner Roger Goodell said in a memo sent to teams on Tuesday and obtained by The Associated Press. "It is also essential for our medical staffs to continue their efforts to monitor everyone in the club environment."

Dr. Allen Sills, the league's chief medical officer, opens and closes the 2 1/2-minute video. Seattle's Carroll, Kansas City's Reid, Baltimore's Harbaugh and Washington's Rivera appear to repeat a simple message: "If you feel something, say something."

"We encourage players and coaches who are feeling ill, no matter how mild the symptoms, it is best to err on the side of caution," Reid says.

Sills reminds players if they have symptoms but test negative, they will not be held out of the team environment.

"Symptom reporting is more important than ever," Sills told the AP. "Vaccinated people may have very different symptoms. Last year, for those who had COVID-19, they might have a high fever and chills and trouble breathing ... and with the vaccination they may have only nasal congestion or a mild sore throat or a headache or fatigue.

"It's challenging to educate people to speak up about symptoms and get tests. It has to happen through multiple forums as we did with vaccinations. Through our athletic trainers and physicians and coaching staffs, there is lots of communication going on."

More than 93% of players and almost all club personnel are vaccinated.

"When an individual fails to report their symptoms, they are much more likely to bring the virus to their colleague and loved ones," Goodell said in the memo. "This increases the risk to people around them and puts teams at a disadvantage. We can do better."

Sills is confident the league won't have significant problems playing out the season.

AZRIEL

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Fatialofa paced GCA with 14 points, while Rosie Saralu top-scored for FMS with 5 points. It was FMS' first loss in three games

GCA again suited up for the fifth and last game Wednesday against Hopwood Middle School 1 and Fatialofa this time wasn't late. With the league's leading scorer, rebounder, and shot blocker jumping at center court, the Lady Eagles were dominant early and led 12-6 after the first half. GCA then blanked HMS 1 in the second half en route to the emphatic 30-6 victory.

Fatialofa led the Lady Eagles with 20 points, while Jerica Manuel topped HMS 1 with 4 markers.

In the second game, HMS 2 almost doubled up Mount Carmel School, 11-6, thanks to the 12 points of Kialeen Leemarvin. Valerie Estella and Mya Pangelinan scored 3 points apiece for the Lady Knights. HMS 2 improved to 3-2, while MCS absorbed its third loss in four games.

HMS 1 posted its first win by keeping Tanapag Middle School winless in the third game, 16-8. Divine Baxter led a balanced scoring attack by the Lady Hilitais 1 with 4 points, while Jerica Manuel and Trista Paul added 4 markers apiece. HMS 1 improved to 1-3 in the team standings (1-4 after losing to GCA later in the day).

In the fourth game, FMS improved to 3-1 after exacting TMS its second straight loss of the day, 17-3. The Lady Napu Riders were paced by Joannah Concillado's 12 points

First Game

GCA 23 – Az. Fatialofa 14, Torres 4, Hall 3, Regan 2.

FMS 9 – Saralu 5, Surima 2, Manahane 2.

Scoring by halves: 11-4, 23-9.

Second Game

HMS-2 21 – Leemarvin 12, Yleisa 4, Jaecias 3, Christopher 2.

MCS 6 – Estella 3, Pangelinan 3.

Scoring by halves: 11-6, 21-6.

Third Game

HMS-1 16 – Baxter 5, Paul 4, Manuel 4, Sablan 2.

TMS 8 – Castro 4, Sablan 2, Achanto 2.

Scoring by halves: 8-4, 16-8.

Fourth Game

FMS 17 – Saralu 12, Diaz 5.

TMS 4 – Sablan 3, Yumul 1.

Scoring by halves: 5-1, 17-4.

Fifth Game

GCA 30 – Az. Fatialofa 20, Hall 6, Torres 4.

HMS-1 6 – Manuel 4, Paul 2.

Scoring by halves: 12-6, 30-6.

MPU

From Page 24

trick to lift Southern United past MP United.

Manahane got help from Megan Elayda and Pia Ngewakl, who tallied one goal each. Aubrey Castro registered all three goals for Southern United.

TanHoldings 14, Shirley's 0

In the first game in the division, TanHoldings crushed Shirley's FC.

Rizza Relucio starred in the victory after firing six goals. Mia Abuan chipped in three and TanHoldings drew goals from four other players to complete the rout of Shirley's.

CO-ED U12 DIVISION TanHoldings 2, MPU Blue 1

TanHoldings nailed a close win in its opener in the division.

Emerson Brillo made both goals for TanHoldings, while Martin Jambor posted the lone goal for MPU Blue.

Paire 6, Matansa 3

Paire outclassed Matansa in the other U12 match last weekend.

Jazzroy Villagomez tallied three goals for Paire, while Rodney Tomei notched twin goals. Paire had an own goal. Anton Megino logged all three goals for Matansa.

GARAPAN

From Page 24

the second half.

Sarang Lee had three goals for the Eagles, who drew one each from Mateo Angeles and Minato Takahashi.

GCA and Garapan 2 are at the bottom draw of the playoff round along with Koblerville Elementary School 1 and William S. Reyes Elementary School 2. Koblerville 1 went on to arrange a semis duel with Garapan 2 after shutting down WSR 2, 6-0.

It was a team effort for Koblerville 1 as four different players scored in their game against WSR 2. Morris Atalig and Napu Pangelinan had two goals apiece, while Eleazar Mettao and Ceejay Sundiam tallied one each.

Koblerville 1 and Garapan 2 will square off for the finals berth today at 5pm. In the other semis pairing at the same time, Garapan 1 will face Saipan International School.

Jazzroy Villagomez put in a show for Garapan 1 in its playoff win over San Vicente 1, as he nailed all of the Mallards' 10 goals. San Vicente 1 averted a shutout loss after drawing its lone goal from Ronald Manabat.

While Garapan 1 leaned on Villagomez to eliminate San Vicente 1, SIS spread the wealth to beat San Vicente 2, 5-1, and advance to the semifinals. Lukas Lee registered two goals for the Geckos, while Beatrice Gross, Yutaro Kitagawa and Finn Altizer chipped in one each. Ellie Iglecias scored the only goal for San Vicente 2.

Kanoa, Shana win 100m open water swim

By MARK RABAGO
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ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Kanoa Owens and Shana Barman emerged the fastest in the 10-and-under division of the 100m race of Saipan Swim Club's final Triple Crown Open Water Swim Series held last Saturday, Sept. 25, in the waters off Civic Center Beach in Susupe.

Owens, swimming for SSC, won the men's division after storming to the shore in 2:49.85. He was followed by Swimming Center Tsunami Saipan's Yutaro Kitagawa at 2:50.82 with SSC's Gabriel Walsh finishing third in 3:34.38.

Kitagawa said he felt a little down after the race after finishing runner-up. "I was very sad because I lost to Kanoa by a second. I should have practiced more."

Barman was the top women's swimmers in the distance after she emerged from the surf in 2:33.44. Sofia Cariaso was second in 3:34.81.

The winner, who is part of the amazing Barman family of swimmers, had to overcome some jitters before the open water swim started.

"I was a little nervous for the final race of the Triple Crown but I wanted to win the race and I think I did my best. I focused on my swim and also the buoy. I felt my arms getting tired after I turned but I tried to keep my strokes high and strong and focused on the goal. I got first place and this is the third time for this ocean swim. I'm really happy and look forward to next year's race."

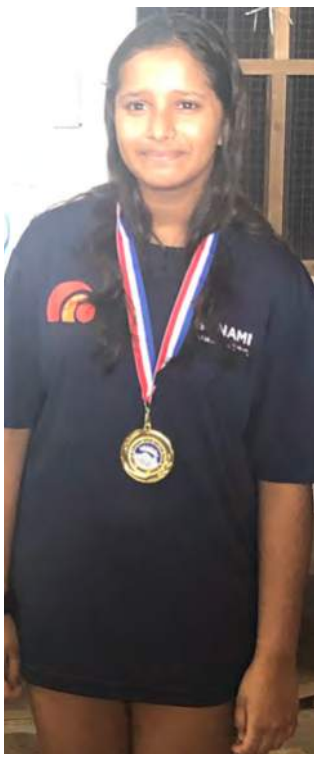
Tsunami Saipan's Prashika Pandey, meanwhile, topped the women's 11-and-over 100m race with a time of 2:48.28. She was followed by Linda He and Corrie Xhai, both of Agape Christian School, at 3:18.96 and 3:19.80, respectively.

"I'm really happy that I got to be a part of the race that was held on Saturday. I think that there should be more things like this because it challenges the swimmers into being better," said Pandey after the swim.

In the men's 11-and-over 100m, Chengwei Zhang was first in 2:32.11 with Zihang Zhang and Jiahui Li second and third with times of 2:36.43 and 2:46.08, respectively. All three are also part of ACS' swimming club.

Results of the 50m and 25m open water races will be published in next week's issues of the *Saipan Tribune*.

MARK RABAGO
From right, Kanoa Owens, Yutaro Kitagawa, and Gabriel Walsh finished 1-2-3 in the men's 10-and-under 100m race of Saipan Swim Club's final Triple Crown Open Water Swim Series held last Saturday, Sept. 25, in the waters off Civic Center Beach in Susupe.



MARK RABAGO
Shana Barman emerged the fastest in the women's 10-and-under 100m race of Saipan Swim Club's final Triple Crown Open Water Swim Series held last Saturday, Sept. 25, in the waters off Civic Center Beach in Susupe.

HIIT vs Steady State Cardio

Ask DRE:

By DRE DELOS SANTOS
Special to the Saipan Tribune

Dre Delos Santos writes about fitness and nutrition for Saipan Tribune *and* TAGA Sports*. He is a personal trainer at Gold's Gym. He is featured on fitness sites such as Weight Watchers, T-Nation, and STACK.*

Something that's been on my mind recently is responsibility. I know at times it may seem like I'm coming across as a jerk whenever I lay out the facts, but I'm not trying to be argumentative. The whole point is to relay applicable information that is backed by science. Reason for this is, in no other industry will you find more pretentious people who believe they're experts than in the health and fitness space. Every time I think we're doing a much better job in putting out good, practical content, some delusional quack with little to zero experience in training and nutrition chimes in with their hollow remark.

Killing yourself in the gym and training for a specific adaptation (muscle growth, fat loss) are not the same thing. You can make the argument there is a small part of the population that perhaps might garner some benefit from that mentality. However, that's a different discussion. For the vast majority, accumulating fatigue for the sake of it thinking you're expediting progress is not very smart. For example, the excess post oxygen consumption or "afterburn" effect that has been a long touted benefit of HIIT has led the vast majority to think it's the superior approach.

Well, it appears to be insignificant from a fat loss and body composition standpoint. The only true advantage it has over lower to moderate intensities is time-efficiency. And obviously, it's less mundane.

Each modality has its pros and cons. You get a lot of work done doing HIIT, but it has a huge impact on your recovery especially if done frequently. On the other end, steady state doesn't beat you up as much. Although, it does require a bigger time allotment. Ultimately, it comes down to what you enjoy doing. And you also have to take into strong consideration what's sustainable for you.

GCA 1, MHS remain undefeated in HS volleyball

By MARK RABAGO
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ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Grace Christian Academy 1 and Marianas High School 1 maintained their unblemished records as the NMIVA-PSS Interscholastic Girls High School Volleyball League 2021-2022 season resumed last Tuesday at the Marianas High School Gymnasium.

The Lady Dolphins 1 was the first on the court and needed only two sets to dispose of Mount Carmel School 3. MHS 1 struggled early and teetered in the brink against the Lady Knights 3 before pulling off the first set win, 25-22. It was more of a smooth sailing in the second set, as the Lady Dolphins 1 found their groove and improved to 5-0 with a 25-13 mastery of MCS 3, which dropped to 3-3.

The MHS 1 team is made up of Arisa Custodio, Abigail Decena, Madelleen Narciso, Fatima Monterubio, Julie Ann Capayas, Daejah Benavente, Rizza Relucio, Raina Avelino, Raenna Ramarui, Kalista Klaver, and Kina Rangamar.

The Lady Eagles 1 also preserved their immaculate win-loss record after cruising past MHS 2, 25-5, 25-7. Coach Cesar Libut's squad, which is now 6-0, includes Karina Dilse, Clerrise Dacumos, Katriel Saures, Hye Jin Elliott, Soleil Lamar, Vicky Wang, Mint Karsuaythong, Eunice Pagaduan, and Allyssa Omampo. The loss was the third in six outings for MHS 2.

In other results last Tuesday, GCA 2 beat Saipan International School 2, 25-10, 25-14; Saipan Southern High School 1 showed no love lost to sister team SSHS, 25-8, 25-17; SIS 1 drop MCS 3, 25-23, 25-20; and MCS 1 took out MHS 3, 25-14, 25-14.

The NMIVA-PSS Interscholastic Girls High School Volleyball League 2021-2022 season returns to action this Saturday with a full six-game schedule at the sweltering hot MHS Gym. The 4:30pm matches will have GCA 1 staking its undefeated record against MCS 3 and MHS 3 duking it out with MCS 2. The 5:30pm games will feature MCS 1 vs MHS 1 and SIS taking on GCA 2. The last pair of games will then have MHS 2 going up against SSHS 1 and SSHS 2 challenging SIS 2.

MARK RABAGO
Grace Christian Academy 1 improved to 6-0 after beating Marianas High School 2 in the NMIVA-PSS Interscholastic Girls High School Volleyball League 2021-2022 season Tuesday at the MHS Gymnasium.

Saipan Vegas to host 'final' XC qualifier

By MARK RABAGO
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ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Kagman High School will be hosting the fourth and supposedly final PSS/NMA Cross Country Qualifier at Saipan Vegas tomorrow, Oct. 2, behind the hotel at Saipan Vegas.

Northern Marianas Athletics distance running coach and cross country meet director Ron Snyder said after the third PSS/NMA Cross Country Qualifier was postponed last week due to the threat of Tropical Depression 20W, it's nice that it didn't take too long for the next installment of the event to be back again.

"We are excited that we are once again able to partner with Saipan Vegas to offer our student athletes a chance to run on this magnificent course. This week is open to all athletes and they will have the opportunity to preview the championship course before the Oct. 9 championship meet which is limited to the Top 6 runners from each school in each category," he said.

Like the previous editions of the PSS/NMA Cross Country Qualifier, tomorrow's race will have three divisions—the 1-mile 12U for elementary students, the 2-mile 14U for middle school students, and the 5-kilomterer 18U for high school students. The 12U division starts at 6:30am and the 14U and the 18U will have a joint start time at 6:50am.

NMA has characterized tomorrow's cross country qualifier as a fast, manicured course looping through fairways and next to putting greens, offering easy cross country and off-road running. It also has slight hills, paved and grass paths that are suitable for spikes if you remain off the paved paths.

The Public School System has partnered with Northern Marianas Athletics, the governing body of athletics in the CNMI, to organize track and field as well as cross country events in the 2021-22 school year.

Registration for the third PSS/NMA Cross Country Qualifier can be accessed via the PSS Shared Drive.

MARK RABAGO
The fourth PSS/NMA Cross Country Qualifier will be held tomorrow, Oct. 2, behind the hotel at Saipan Vegas.

Bichette powers Jays past Yanks, AL wild card race tightens

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Kanoa, Shana win 100m open water swim

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Garapan takes two semis seats

Azriel lifts Lady Eagles to 7-0 in HS hoops

By MARK RABAGO
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ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Like its starting center Azriel Fatialofa, Grace Christian Academy is heads above the competition and the Lady Eagles proved this once again last Wednesday when they improved to 7-0 in the IT&E Interscholastic Girls Middle School Basketball League after beating two teams at the Marianas High School Gymnasium.

In the first game, GCA went down 0-6 early against Francisco M. Sablan Middle School as the towering Fatialofa was late for the match. However, when the Fatialofa arrived the Lady Eagles proceeded to outscore FMS, 23-3, to earn its sixth win in six outings.

See AZRIEL on Page 22

ROSELYN B. MONROYO
Grace Christian Academy's Azriel Fatialofa, left, takes a shot against Hopwood Middle School 2 during their game in the IT&E Interscholastic Basketball League last Wednesday at the Marianas High School Gymnasium.

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

Garapan Elementary School boosted its championship bid in the NMIFA-PSS Interscholastic Soccer League 2021-2022 after bagging two semis berths last Wednesday at the NMI Soccer Training Center in Koblerville.

Garapan 1 booked the first semis ticket in the competition following a 10-1 thumping of San Vicente Elementary School 1, while Garapan 2 also moved to the Final Four after pulling off an upset over Grace Christian Academy, 7-5.

The Eagles came into the playoff match against Garapan 2 unbeaten in three games. The Mallards then ended that winning run behind the impressive game of Kanoa Owens, who scored four of Garapan 2's five goals in succession in the second half. Owens' string of goals started in the 26th minute, while his last three were recorded in a span of six minutes, as he hit the back of the net in the 33rd, 37th, and 39th. Adam Labadan tallied the two other goals for Garapan 2, as he scored in the 14th and 22nd minute and the Mallards got an own goal in

See GARAPAN on Page 22

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Garapan Elementary School 1's Jazzroy Villagomez, third left, works the ball in front of two William S. Reyes Elementary School 2 defenders during a pool play game in the NMIFA-PSS Interscholastic Soccer League 2021-2022 last week at the NMI Soccer Training Center in Koblerville.

MPU, TanHoldings rout foes in opener

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

MP United Football Club and TanHoldings Football Club came out strong in the opening of the 2021 NMIFA Youth Fall League last Saturday at the NMI Soccer Training Center in Koblerville.

TanHoldings played in the curtain-raiser in the boys U15 division and hammered Paire Football Club, 10-0, while MP United closed out the action in the division and whipped Shirley's Football Club, 15-0.

Isaiah Barcinas paced MP United with his four goals, while Ian Song and Miles Linden chipped in three apiece.

Mark Joseph Patubo and Anthony Austria also had three goals each in TanHoldings' lopsided win over Paire.

Anthony John Bergancia added a pair, while Christian Lucero and Mark Ryan Costales made one each.

In the second game in the division, Kanoa Football Club downed Matansa, 6-2. Markus Toves had twin goals for Kanoa, while Paul Lizama, Christopher Daikichy, and Leland Deleon Guerero contributed one apiece. Kanoa also got an own goal, while Matansa's pair came from Philip Megino.

GIRLS U15 DIVISION
Kanoa 5, Paire 4

Kanoa triumphed too in the girls U15 game last weekend after nipping Paire.

Valerie Estella delivered two goals for Kanoa, including the game-winning goal in the 50th minute. Kanoa was credited an own goal and drew two from Kaleen Leemarvin.

Kylie Sabina scored two goals for Paire, while Miranda Borja and Teneasha Diaz made one apiece.

Southern United 5, MP United 3

Summer Manahane had a hat-

See MPU on Page 22

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
MP United Football Club coach Chris Aninzo gestures to his players during the halftime break in their boys U15 division game against Shirley's FC during the opening week of the 2021 NMIFA Youth Fall League last Saturday at the NMI Soccer Training Center in Koblerville.